

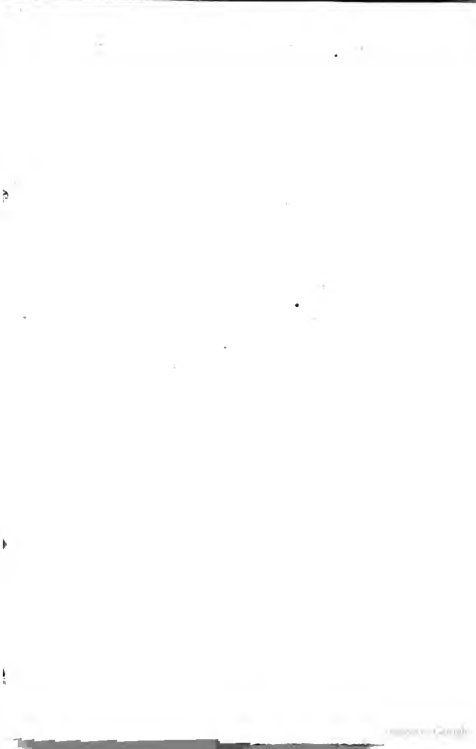


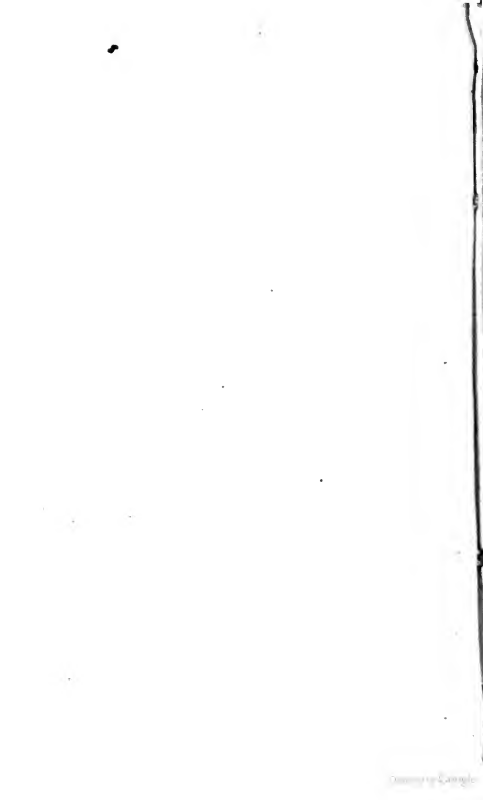
16

9

333

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE
CENTRALE - FIRENZE

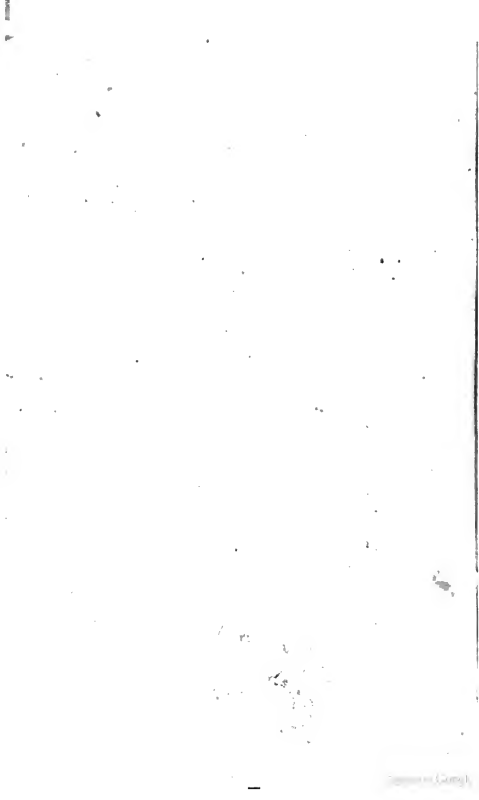




Margaret Taylor.

Nov. 1858.





SHELLEY'S
POETICAL WORKS.



LONDON.

CHARLES DALY
RED LION SQUARE.

16.9.333

THE
P O E T I C A L W O R K S

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

COMPLETE.

LONDON :
C. DALY, 19, RED LION SQUARE.
MDCCCXXXIX.



P R E F A C E.

The poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley, of which, for the first time in this country, a miniature collection has in the following pages been made, displays the greatest depth of feeling, alternating with puerile conceit, and common-place declamation. His command of language was, perhaps, as great, as that of any modern poet; but, either carelessness, or want of sustained power, continually plunged his ideas into impenetrable obscurities of expression, from which, not all the efforts made by the reader can at times extricate them. He seems, in many instances to have had a most refined ear for all the touching music of versification, and yet many of his very best poems, (as to depth of thought, and power of imagination,) might be read as prose. His most prevalent fault is a want of accuracy and clearness in expressing his ideas. Still, there is a charm not easily described about his writings which redeems the errors more obvious to criticism, and which will ever render him a favorite with the lover of genuine poetry, though he may never be an object of general admiration—for the public cannot cull flowers and select the riper from the cruder fruits. They must have all the sweets of poetry served up in order, and adorned with art. Had the brief span of Shelley's life been lengthened out, there can be no doubt that the efforts of his more matured years would have outshone in brilliancy even those of his

contemporary rivals in the art ; and it is to be lamented that his life was so short, as there is a sublimity in many of his ideas—a rich vein of deep thought, and powerful feeling running through most of his productions—it may render them perfect studies for the poet.

The poem of " Queen Mab," which has been styled " his glory as a poet, and his shame as a man," was penned at the early age of 18 ; and it contains many parts written in the most gorgeous and masterly style ; and for imaginative description, perhaps is not excelled in any poem ever produced ; but (as has been well observed,) the titles of the Divine Being are so often indecorously sported with in such outrageous paradoxes, coupled with much that is decidedly vile and detestable, that it may be safely asserted no single individual retaining one spark of religious feeling, can ever have that spark extinguished by a perusal of the poem."—It is this feeling that has caused its retention in the present pages ; as it contains beauties of a most transcendent nature ; and no edition of his poems could be deemed perfect without it.

THE CENCI.

— 00 —

ACT I

SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter COUNT CENCI
and CARDINAL CAMILLO.*

Cam. THAT matter of the murder is hushed up
If you consent to yield his Holiness
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.
It needed all my interest in the conclave
To bend him to this point: he said that you
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;
That crimes like yours, if once or twice compounded,
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell
An erring soul which might repent and live;
But, that the glory and the interest
Of the high throne he fills, little consist
With making it a daily mart of guilt
As manifold and hideous as the deeds
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

Cen. The third of my possessions!—let it go!
Ah, I once heard the nephew of the Pope
Had sent his architect to view the ground,
Meaning to build a villa on my vines
The next time I compounded with his uncle:
I little thought he should outwit me so!
Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see
That which the vassal threatened to divulge,
Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.
The deed he saw could not have rated higher
That his most worthless life—it angers me!
Respited me from Hell!—So may the Devil |ment,
Respice their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Cle-
And his most charitable nephews, pray

That the Apostle Peter and the saints
Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy
Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days,
Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards
Of their revenue.—But much yet remains
To which they show no title.

Cam......O Count Cenci!
So much that thou mightst honourably live,
And reconcile thyself with thine own heart,
And with thy God, and with the offended world.
How hideously look deeds of lust and blood
Thro' those snow-white and venerable hairs!
Your children should be sitting round you now,
But that you fear to read upon their looks
The shame and misery you have written there.
Where is your wife? where is your gentle daughter?
Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else
Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.
Why is she barred from all society
But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?
Talk with me, Count:—you know I mean you well
I stood beside your dark and fiery youth
Watching its bold and bad career, as men
Watch meteors, but it vanished not: I marked
Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now
Do I behold you, in dishonoured age,
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.
Yet have I ever hoped you would amend,
And in that hope have saved your life three times.

Cen. For which Aldobrandino owes you now
My fief beyond the Pincian. Cardinal,
One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,
And so we shall converse with less restraint.
A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter:
He was accustomed to frequent my house;
So the next day *his* wife and daughter came
And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:
I think they never saw him any more.

Cam. Thou execrable man, beware!—

Cen. Of thee?

Nay, this is idle: we should know each other.

As to my character for what men call crime,
 Seeing I please my senses as I list,
 And vindicate that right with force or guile,
 It is a public matter, and I care not
 If I discuss it with you. I may speak
 Alike to you and my own conscious heart ;
 For you give out that you have half reformed me
 Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent
 If fear should not ; both will, I do not doubt.
 All men delight in sensual luxury,
 All men enjoy revenge ; and most exult
 Over the tortures they can never feel ;
 Flattering their secret peace with others' pain
 But I delight in nothing else. I love
 The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,
 When this shall be another's and that mine.
 And I have no remorse and little fear,
 Which are, I think, the checks of other men.
 This mood has grown upon me, until now
 Any design my captious fancy makes
 The picture of its wish, and it forms none
 But such as men like you would start to know,
 Is as my natural food and rest debarred
 Until it be accomplished.

Cam......Art thou not
 Most miserable ?

Cen. Why miserable ?—

No. I am what your theologians call
 Hardened ; which they must be in impudence,
 So to revile a man's peculiar taste.
 True, I was happier than I am, while yet
 Manhood remained to act the thing I thought ;
 While lust was sweeter than revenge ; and now
 Invention palls : ay, we must all grow old :
 And but that there yet remains a deed to act
 Whose horror might make sharp an appetite
 Duller than mine—I'd do,—I know not what.
 When I was young I thought of nothing else
 But pleasure, and I fed on honey sweets :
 Men, by St. Thomas ! cannot live like bees,
 And I grew tired : yet, till I killed a foe,

And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,
 Knew I not what delight was else on earth,
 Which now delights me little. I the rather
 Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals.
 The dry fixed eyeball, the pale quivering lip,
 Which tell me that the spirit weeps within
 Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.
 I rarely kill the body, which preserves,
 Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,
 Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear
 For hourly pain.

Cam. Hell's most abandoned fiend
 Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,
 Speak to his heart as now you speak to me ;
 I thank my God that I believe you not.

Enter ANDREA.

Andr. My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca
 Would speak with you.

Cen. Bid him attend me in the grand saloon.

(Exit Andrea.)

Cam. Farewell ; and I will pray
 Almighty God that thy false, impious words
 Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee. *(Exit Camillo)*

Cen. The third of my possessions ! I must use
 Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,
 Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday
 There came an order from the Pope to make
 Fourfold provision for my cursed sons
 Whom I had sent from Rome to Salamanca,
 Hoping some accident might cut them off,
 And meaning if I could to starve them there.
 I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them !
 Bernardo and my wife could not be worse
 If dead and damned : then, as to Beatrice—

(Looking around him suspiciously.)

I think they cannot hear me at that door.
 What if they should ? And yet I need not speak,
 Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.
 O thou most silent air, that shalt not hear
 What now I think ! Thou pavement, which I tread

Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk
Of my imperious step, scorning surprise,
But not of my intent!—Andrea!

Enter ANDREA.

Andr. My Lcrd!

Cen. Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber
This evening:—no, at midnight, and alone. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

*A Garden of the Cenci Palace. Enter BEATRICE and
ORSINO, as in conversation.*

Beatr. Pervert not truth,
Orsino. You remember where we held
That conversation:—nay, we see the spot
Even from this cypress:—two long years are past
Since, on an April midnight, underneath
The moonlight ruins of mount Palatine,
I did confess to you my secret mind.

Ors. You said you loved me then.

Beatr. You are a priest.

Speak to me not of love.

Ors. I may obtain

The dispensation of the Pope to marry.
Because I am a priest do you believe
Your image, (as the hunter some struck deer,)
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?

Beatr. As I have said, speak to me not of love.
Had you a dispensation, I have not;
Nor will I leave this home of misery
Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady
To whom I owe life and these virtuous thoughts,
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.
Alas, Orsino! all the love that once
I felt for you is turned to bitter pain.
Our's was a youthful contract, which you first
Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose

And thus I love you still, but holily,
 Even as a sister or a spirit might ;
 And so I swear a cold fidelity :
 And it is well perhaps we should not marry.
 You have a sly equivocating vein
 That suits me not. Ah, wretched that I am !
 Where shall I turn ? E'en now you look on me
 As you were not my friend, and as if you
 Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles
 Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.
 Ah !—No, forgive me ; sorrow makes me seem
 Sterner than else my nature might have been :
 I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,
 And they forbode,—but what can they forbode
 Worse than I now endure ?

Ors. All will be well.

Is the petition yet prepared ? You know
 My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice ;
 Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill,
 So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

Beatr. Your zeal for all I wish.—Ah me, you are cold !
 Your utmost skill—speak but one word—

(*Aside*) Alas !

Weak and deserted creature that I am,
 Here I stand bickering with my only friend ! (*To Orsino*)
 This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,
 Orsino ; he has heard some happy news
 From Salamanca, from my brothers there,
 And with this outward show of love he mocks
 His inward hate. 'Tis bold hypocrisy,
 For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,
 Which I have heard him pray for on his knees :
 Great God ! that such a father should be mine .
 But there is mighty preparation made,
 And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,
 And all the chief nobility of Rome.
 And he has bidden me and my pale mother
 Attire ourselves in festival array.
 Poor lady ! she expects some happy change
 In his dark spirit from this act ; I none.
 At supper I will give you the petition :

Fill when—farewell.

Ors. Farewell.

(Exit Beatrice.)

I know the Pope

Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow

But by absolving me from the revenue

Of many a wealthy see ; and, Beatrice,

I think to win thee at an easier rate.

Nor shall he read her eloquent petition ;

He might bestow her on some poor relation

Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister,

And I should be debarred from all access.

Then, as to what she suffers from her father,

In all this there is much exaggeration :

Old men are testy, and will have their way ;

A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,

And live a free life as to wine or women,

And with a peevish temper may return

To a dull home, and rate his wife and children ;

Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.

I shall be well content, if on my conscience

There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer

From the devices of my love—A net

From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear

Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,

Whose beams anatomize me, nerve by nerve,

And lay me bare, and make me blush to see

My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no ! A friendless girl,

Who clings to me as to her only hope :—

I were a fool, not less than if a panther

Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye,

If she escapes me.

(Exit.)

SCENE III.

A magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace. A Banquet.

Enter CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO,

NOBLES.

Cen. Welcome, my friends and kinsmen ; welcome, ye
Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church—

Whose presence honours our festivity.
 I have too long lived like an anchorite,
 And, in my absence from your merry meetings,
 An evil word is gone abroad of me ;
 But I hope that you my noble friends,
 When you have shared the entertainment here,
 And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,
 And we have pledged a health or two together,
 Will think me flesh and blood as well as you ;
 Sinful, indeed, for Adam made all so,
 But tender-hearted, meek, and pitiful. [heart

1. *Guest.* In truth, my Lord, you seem too light o
 Too sprightly and companionable a man,
 To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.

(To his companion.)

I never saw such blithe and open cheer
 In any eye !

2. *Guest.* Some most desired event,
 In which we all demand a common joy,
 Has brought us hither ; let us hear it, Count.

Cen. It is indeed a most desired event :
 If, when a parent, from a parent's heart,
 Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all
 A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep
 And when he rises up from dreaming it ;
 One supplication, one desire, one hope,
 That he would grant a wish for his two sons,
 Even all that he demands in their regard—
 And suddenly, beyond his dearest hope,
 It is accomplished,—he should then rejoice,
 And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,
 And task their love to grace his merriment.

Beatr. (to *Lucretia*) Great God ! how horrible !
 Some dreadful ill
 Must have befallen my brothers.

Lucr. Fear not, child ;
 He speaks too frankly.

Beatr. Ah ! my blood runs cold.
 I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,
 Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

Cen. Here are the letters brought from Salamanca ,

Beatrice, read them to your mother. God,
 I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,
 By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.
 My disobedient and rebellious sons [cheer?
 Are dead!—Why, dead!—What means this change of
 You hear me not:—I tell you they are dead:
 And they will need no food nor raiment more:
 The tapers that did light them the dark way
 Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not
 Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.
 Rejoice with me, my heart is wondrous glad.

Beatr. (Lucretia sinks half fainting; Beatrice supports her.)

It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.
 Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,
 He would not live to boast of such a boon.
 Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

Cen. Ay, as the word of God; whom here I call
 To witness that I speak the sober truth:
 And whose most favouring Providence was shown
 Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco
 Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,
 When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy.
 The rest escaped unhurt. Christofano
 Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,
 Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;
 All in the self-same hour of the same night;
 Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.
 I beg those friends who love me, that they mark
 The day a feast upon their calendars.

It was the twenty-seventh of December:
 Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

(The assembly appears confused; several of the guests rise.)

1. *Guest.* Oh, horrible! I will depart.

2. *Guest.* And I.

3. *Guest.* No, stay!

I do believe it is some jest; though, faith,

'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.

I think his son has married the Infanta,

Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado:

'Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay!

I see tis only raillery by his smile.

Cen. (*Filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up.*)
O thou bright wine, whose purple splendor leaps
And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl
Under the lamp-light, as my spirits do,
To hear the death of my accursed sons!
Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,
Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,
And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell;
Who, if a father's curses, as men say,
Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,
And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,
Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art
Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,
And I will taste no other wine to-night.
Here, Andrea! bear the bowl around.

A Guest (rising.) Thou wretch!
Will none among this noble company
Check the abandoned villain?

Cam. For God's sake
Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane;
Some ill will come of this.

2. *Guest.* Seize, silence him!

1. *Guest.* I will!

3. *Guest.* And I!

Cen. (*Addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture.*)
Who moves? who speaks? (*Turning to the company.*)
'Tis nothing.

Enjoy yourselves.—Beware! For my revenge
Is as the sealed commission of a king,
That kills, and none dare name the murderer.
(*The banquet is broken up; several of the guests are departing.*)

Beatr. I do intreat you, go not, noble guests;
What, although tyranny and impious hate
Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair;
What, if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs
Who tortures them, and triumphs;—what, if we,
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,
His children and his wife, whom he is bound

To love and shelter—shall we therefore find
 No refuge in this merciless wide world ?
 Oh, think what deep wrongs must have blotted out
 First love, then reverence, in a child's prone mind,
 Till it thus vanquish shame and fear ! O think !
 I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand
 Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke
 Was perhaps some paternal chastisement !
 Have excused much, doubted ; and, when no doubt
 Remained, have sought by patience, love, and tears,
 To soften him ; and, when this could not be,
 I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights
 And lifted up to God, the Father of all,
 Passionate prayers ; and when these were not heard
 I have still borne—until I meet you here,
 Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast,
 Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,
 His wife remains and I, whom, if ye save not,
 Ye may soon share such merriment again
 As fathers make over their children's graves.
 O Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman ;
 Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain ;
 Camillo, thou art the chief justiciary ;
 Take us away !

Cen. (He has been conversing with Camillo during the first part of Beatrice's speech ; he hears the conclusion, and now advances.)

I hope my good friends here
 Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps
 Of their own throats—before they lend an ear
 To this wild girl.

Beatr. Not noticing the words of Cenci.)

Dare no one look on me ?
 None answer ? Can one tyrant overbear
 The sense of many best and wisest men ?
 Or is it that I sue not in some form
 Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit ?
 O God ! that I were buried with my brothers !
 And that the flowers of this departed spring
 Were fading on my grave ! and that my father
 Were celebrating now one feast for all !

Cam. A bitter wish for one so young and gentle.
Can we do nothing?

Colon. Nothing that I see.
Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy ;
Yet I would second any one.

A Card. And I.

Gen. Retire to your chamber, insolent girl !

Beatr. Retire thou, impious man ! Ay, hide thyself
Where never eye can look upon thee more !
Wouldst thou have honour and obedience,
Who art a torturer ? Father, never dream,
That thou mayest overbear this company,
But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me !
Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks
My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat !
Cover thy face from every living eye,
And start if thou but hear a human step :
Seek out some dark and silent corner, there
Bow thy white head before offended God,
And we will kneel around, and fervently
Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

Gen. My friends, I do lament this insane girl
Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.—
Good night, farewell. I will not make you longer
Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.—
Another time.—

(Exeunt all but Cenci and Beatrice.)

My brain is swimming round.

Give me a bowl of wine !

(To Beatrice.) Thou painted viper !

Beast that thou art ! fair and yet terrible !

I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame.

Now get thee from my sight ! *(Exit Beatrice.)*

Here, Andrea,

Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said

I would not drink this evening, but I must ;

For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail *wine.)*

With thinking what I have decreed to do. *(Drinking the*

Be thou the resolution of quick youth

Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,

And age's firm, cold, subtle villany ;

As if thou wert indeed my children's blood
Which I did thirst to drink. The charm works well;
It must be done; it shall be done, I swear! (Exit.)

—00—

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.

Lucr. Weep not my gentle boy; he struck but me,
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he
Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.
O God Almighty, do thou look upon us,
We have no other friend but only thee!
Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,
I am not your true mother.

Ber. Oh more, more,
Than ever mother was to any child,
That have you been to me! Had he not been
My father, do you think that I should weep? [doubtful]

Lucr. Alas! poor boy, what else couldst thou have

Enter BEATRICE.

Beatr. (In a hurried voice.)

Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?
Ah! no; that is his step upon the stairs;
'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;
Mother, if I to thee have ever been
A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,
Whose image upon earth a father is,
Dost thou indeed abandon me? He comes;
The door is opening now; I see his face;
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,
Even as he did after the feast last night.

Enter a Servant.

Almighty God, how merciful thou art!
'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

Serv. My master bids me say, the Holy Father

Has sent back your petition thus unopened. (*Giving a*
 And he demands at what hour 'twere secure [*paper.*]
 To visit you again.

Lucr. At the Ave Mary. (*Exit Servant.*)

See, daughter, our last hope has failed. Ah me,
 How pale you look! you tremble, and you stand
 Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation,
 As if one thought were overstrong for you:
 Your eyes have a chill glare. O dearest child,
 Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

Beatr. You see I am not mad; I speak to you.

Lucr. You talked of something that your father did
 After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse
 Than when he smiled, and cried, My sons are dead!
 And every one looked in his neighbour's face
 To see if others were as white as he?
 At the first word he spoke, I felt the blood
 Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;
 And when it past I sat all weak and wild;
 Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words
 Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see
 The devil was rebuked that lives in him.
 Until this hour thus you have ever stood
 Between us and your father's moody wrath
 Like a protecting presence: your firm mind
 Has been our only refuge and defence:
 What can have thus subdued it? What can now
 Have given you that cold melancholy look,
 Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?

Beatr. What is it that you say? I was just thinking
 'Twere better not to struggle any more.
 Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody,
 Yet never—Oh! before worse comes of it,
 'Twere wise to die: it ends in that at last.

Lucr. Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once
 What did your father do or say to you?
 He stayed not after that accursed feast
 One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

Beatr. O sister, sister, prithee speak to us!

Beatr. (*Speaking very slowly with a forced calmness.*)
 It was one word, mother, one little word;
 One look, one smile. (*wildly*)

Oh! he has trampled me
 Under his feet, and made the blood stream down
 My palid cheeks. And he has given us all
 Ditch water, and the fever-stricken flesh
 Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,
 And we have eaten. He has made me look
 On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust
 Of heavy chains had gangrened his sweet limbs,
 And I have never yet despaired—but now!
 What would I say? *(Recovering herself.)*

Ah! no, 'tis nothing new.
 The sufferings we all share have made me wild:
 He only struck and cursed me as he passed.
 He said he looked, he did,—nothing at all
 Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.
 Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,
 I should preserve my senses for your sake.

Lucr. Nay, Beatrice, have courage, my sweet girl,
 If any one despairs it should be I,
 Who loved him once, and now must live with him
 Till God in pity call for him or me.
 For you may, like your sister, find some husband,
 And smile, years hence, with children round your knees;
 Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil,
 Shall be remembered only as a dream.

Beatr. Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.
 Did you not nurse me when my mother died?
 Did you not shield me and that dearest boy?
 And had we any other friend but you
 In infancy, with gentle words and looks,
 To win our father not to murder us?
 And shall I now desert you? May the ghost
 Of my dead mother plead against my soul
 If I abandon her who filled the place
 She left with more even than a mother's love!

Ber. And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed
 I would not leave you in this wretchedness,
 Even though the Pope should make me free to live
 In some blithe place, like others of my age,
 With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.
 Oh, never think that I will leave you, mother!

Lucr. My dear dear children!

Enter CENCI, suddenly.

Cen. What, Beatrice here!
Come hither! *(She shrinks back, and covers her face.)*
Nay hide not your face, 'tis fair;

Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look
With disobedient insolence upon me,
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide
That which I came to tell you—but in vain.

Beatr. *(Wildly staggering towards the door.)*
Oh, that the earth would gape! Hide me, O God!

Cen. Then it was I whose inarticulate words
Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.
Stay, I command you: from this day and hour
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber!
Thou, too, loathed image of thy cursed mother,
(To Beatr.) Thy milky meek face makes me sick with hate!
(Exeunt Beatr. and Cen.)

(Aside.) So much has pass'd between us as must make
Me bold, her fearful. 'Tis an awful thing
To touch such mischief as I now conceive.
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in—
How the delighted spirit pants for joy?

Lucr. *(Advancing timidly towards him.)*
O husband, pray forgive poor Beatrice;
She meant not any ill.

Cen. Nor you, perhaps?
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote
Paricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred
Enmity up against me with the Pope?
Whom in one night merciful God cut off.
Innocent lambs! they thought not any ill.
You were not here conspiring? You said nothing
Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;

Or be condemned to death for some offence,
 And you would be the witnesses?—This failing.
 How just it were to hire assassins, or
 Put sudden poison in my evening drink?
 Or smother me when overcome by wine?
 Seeing we had no other judge but God,
 And he had sentenced me, and there were none
 But you to be the executioners
 Of his decree, enregistered in heaven?
 Oh, no! You said not this?

Lucr. So help me God,
 I never thought the things you charge me with!

Cen. If you dare speak that wicked lie again
 I'll kill you. What! it was not by your counsel
 That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?
 You did not hope to stir some enemies
 Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn
 What every nerve of you now trembles at?
 You judged that men were bolder than they are:
 Few dared to stand between their grave and me.

Lucr. Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation,
 I knew not aught that Beatrice designed;
 Nor do I think she designed any thing
 Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

Cen. Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this!
 But I will take you where you may persuade
 The stones you tread on to deliver you:
 For men shall there be none but those who dare
 All things; not question that which I command.
 On Wednesday next I shall set out; you know
 That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella:
 'Tis safely walled, and moated round about:
 Its dungeons under ground, and its thick towers,
 Never told tales; though they have heard and seen
 What might make dumb things speak. Why do you linger?
 Make speediest preparation for the journey!

(Exit Lucrèce.)

The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear
 A busy stir of men about the streets;
 I see the bright sky through the window panes;
 It is a garish, broad, and peering day;

Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears;
 And every little corner, nook, and hole,
 Is penetrated with the insolent light.
 Come, darkness!—Yet, what is the day to me?
 And wherefore should I wish for night, who do
 A deed which shall confound both day and night?
 'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist
 Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven
 She shall not dare to look upon its beams,
 Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night;
 The act I think shall soon extinguish all
 For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom
 Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,
 Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,
 In which I walk secure and unbeheld
 Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done! (*Exit*;

SCENE II.

A chamber in the Vatican. Enter CAMILLO and GIACOMO, in conversation.

Cam. There is an obsolete and doubtful law
 By which you might obtain a bare provision
 Of food and clothing—

Giac. Nothing more? Alas!
 Bare must be the provision which strict law
 Awards, and aged sullen avarice pays.
 Why did my father not apprentice me
 To some mechanic trade? I should have then
 Been trained in no high-born necessities
 Which I could meet not by my daily toil.
 The eldest son of a rich nobleman
 Is heir to all his incapacities;
 He has wide wants and narrow powers. If you,
 Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once
 From thrice-driven beds of down and delicate food,
 A hundred servants and six palaces,
 To that which nature doth indeed require—

Cam. Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard

Giac. 'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I
 Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,
 Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father,
 Without a bond or witness to the deed:
 And children, who inherit her fine senses,
 The fairest creatures in this breathing world;
 And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,
 Do you not think the Pope would interpose,
 And stretch authority beyond the law?

Cam. Though your peculiar case is hard, I know
 The Pope will not divert the course of law.
 After that impious feast the other night
 I spoke with him, and urged him then to check
 Your father's cruel hand; he frowned, and said,
 "Children are disobedient, and they sting
 "Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,
 "Requiting years of care with contumely.
 "I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;
 "His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,
 "And thus he is exasperated to ill.
 "In the great war between the old and young,
 "I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,
 "Will keep at least blameless neutrality."

Enter ORSINO.

You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words.

Ors. What words?

Giac. Alas, repeat them not again!
 There then is no redress for me; at least
 None but that which I may achieve myself,
 Since I am driven to the brink. But, say,
 My innocent sister and my only brother
 Are dying underneath my father's eye.
 The memorable tortures of this land,
 Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,
 Never inflicted on their meanest slave
 What these endure; shall they have no protection?

Cam. Why, if they would petition to the Pope
 I see not how he could refuse it—yet
 He holds it of most dangerous example
 In aught to weaken the paternal power,

Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own,
 I pray you now excuse me. I have business
 That will not bear delay. *(Exit)*

Giac. But you, Orsino,
 Have the petition : wherefore not present it ?

Ors. I have presented it, and backed it with
 My earnest prayers and urgent interest ;
 It was returned unanswered. I doubt not
 But that the strange and execrable deeds
 Alleged in it (in truth they might well baffle
 Any belief) have turned the Pope's displeasure
 Upon the accusers from the criminal :
 So I should guess from what Canillo said.

Giac. My friend, that palace-walking devil, Gold,
 Has whispered silence to his Holiness,
 And, being left as scorpions ringed with fire,
 What should we do but strike ourselves to death ?
 For he who is our murderous persecutor
 Is shielded by a father's holy name,
 Or I would—— *(stops abruptly)*

Ors. What ? Fear not to speak your thought.
 Words are but holy as the deeds they cover :
 A priest who has forsworn the God he serves ;
 A judge who makes truth weep at his decree ,
 A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,
 But as the mantle of some selfish guile ;
 A father who is all a tyrant seems,
 Were the profaner for his sacred name.

Giac. Ask me not what I think ; the unwilling brain
 Feigns often what it would not ; and we trust
 Imagination with such fantasies
 As the tongue dares not fashion into words ;
 Which have no words, their horror makes them dim
 To the mind's eye. My heart denies itself
 To think what you demand.

Ors. But a friend's bosom
 Is as the inmost cave of our own mind,
 Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day,
 And from the all-communicating air.
 You look what I suspected.

Giac. Spare me, now !

I am as one lost in a midnight wood,
 Who dares not ask some harmless passenger
 The path across the wilderness, lest he,
 As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.
 I know you are my friend, and all I dare
 Speak to my soul, that will I trust with thee.
 But now my heart is heavy, and would take
 Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.
 Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!
 I would that to my own suspected self
 I could address a word so full of peace.

Ors. Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold.
(Exit Giacomo.)

I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo
 To feed his hope with cold encouragement:
 It fortunately serves my close designs
 That 'tis a trick of this same family
 To analyse their own and other minds.
 Such self-anatomy shall teach the will
 Dangerous secrets; for it tempts our powers,
 Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,
 Into the depth of darkest purposes:
 So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,
 Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,
 And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,
 Shew a poor figure to my own esteem,
 To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do
 As little mischief as I can: that thought
 Shall fee the accuser conscience. *(After a pause.)*

Now what harm
 If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered,
 Wherefore by me? and what if I could take
 The profit, yet omit the sin and peril
 In such an action? Of all earthly things
 I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;
 And such is Cenci; and while Cenci lives
 His daughter's dowry were a secret grave,
 If a priest wins her.—O fair Beatrice!
 Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee
 Could but despise danger and gold, and all
 That frowns between my wish and its effect,

Or smiles beyond it ! There is no escape :
 Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,
 And follows me to the resort of men,
 And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,
 So, when I awake, my blood seems liquid fire ;
 And, if I strike my damp and dizzy head,
 My hot palm scorches it : her very name,
 But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart
 Sicken and pant ; and thus unprofitably
 I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights,
 Till weak imagination half possesses
 The self-created shadow. Yet much longer
 Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours :
 From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo
 I must work out my own dear purposes.
 I see, as from a tower, the end of all :
 Her father dead ; her brother bound to me
 By a dark secret, surer than the grave ;
 Her mother scared and unexpostulating
 From the dread manner of her wish achieved :
 And she !—Once more take courage, my faint heart ;
 What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee ?
 I have such foresight as assures success :
 Some unbeheld divinity doth ever
 When dread events are near, stir up men's minds
 To black suggestions ; and he prospers best,
 Not who becomes the instrument of ill,
 But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes
 Its empire add its prey of other hearts,
 Till it become his slave—as I will do. (Exit.)

—00—

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*An apartment in the Cenci Palace. LUCRETIA ; to her
 enter BEATRICE.*

Beatr. (She enters staggering, and speaks wildly.)
 Reach me the handkerchief !—My brain is hurt ;

My eyes are full of blood ; just wipe them for me—
I see but indistinctly :—

Lucr. My sweet child,
You have no wound ; 'tis only a cold dew
That starts from your dear brow—Alas ! alas !
What has befallen ?

Beatr. How comes this hair undone ?
Its wandering strings must be what blind me
And yet I tied it fast.—Oh, horrible !
The pavement sinks under my feet ! The walls
Spin round ! I see a woman weeping there,
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I
Slide giddily as the world reels—My God !
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood !
The sunshine on the floor is black ! The air
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe
In charnel pits !—Pah ! I am choked ! There creeps
A clinging, black, contaminating mist
About me—'tis substantial, heavy, thick ;
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues
My fingers and my limbs to one another,
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life !
My God ! I never knew what the mad felt
Before ; for I am mad beyond all doubt ! (*More wildly.*)
No, I am dead ! These putrifying limbs
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul. [*a pause.*]
Which would burst forth into the wandering air !
What hideous thought was that I had e'en now ?
'Tis gone ; and yet its burthen remains here
O'er these dull eyes—upon this weary heart !
O world ! O life ! O day ! O misery ! [*not:*]

Lucr. What ails thee, my poor child ?—She answers
Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,
But not its cause ; suffering has dried away
The source from which it sprung.

Beatr. (*frantically.*) Like parricide—
Misery has killed its father : yet, its father,
Never like mine—O God ! what thing am I ?

Lucr. My dearest child what has your father done ?

Beatr. (doubtfully.)

Who art thou, questioner? I have no father. *(aside.)*
 She is the mad-house nurse who tends on me.
 It is a piteous office.

(To Lucretia, in a slow subdued voice.)

Do you know

I thought I was that wretched Beatrice
 Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales
 From hall to hall by the entangled hair;
 At others, pens up naked in damp cells
 Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,
 Till she will eat strange flesh. This woeful story
 So did I overact in my sick dreams,
 That I imagined—no, it cannot be!
 Horrible things have been in this wild world.
 Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange
 Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived
 Than ever there was found a heart to do.
 But never fancy imagined such a deed.
 As—— *(pauses, suddenly recollecting herself.)*
 Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die
 With fearful expectation, that indeed
 Thou art not what thou seemest—Mother!

Lucr. Oh!

My sweet child, know you—

Beatr. Yet speak it not:

For then if this be truth, that other too
 Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,
 Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,
 Never to change, never to pass away.
 Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;
 Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice.
 I have talked some wild words, but will no more.
 Mother, come near me: from this point of time,
 I am—— *(her voice dies away faintly.)*

Lucr. Alas! what has befallen thee, child?
 What has thy father done?

Beatr. What have I done?

Am I not innocent? Is it my crime
 That one with white hair, and imperious brow,
 Who tortured me from my forgotten years,

As parents only dare, should call himself
My father, yet should be—Oh, what am I?
What name, what place, what memory, shall be mine?
What retrospects, outliving even despair?

Lucr. He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:
We know that death alone can make us free;
His death or ours. But what can he have done
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury?
Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,
Unlock those palid hands whose fingers twine
With one another.

Beatr. 'Tis the restless life
Tortured within them. If I try to speak
I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done;
What, yet I know not—something which shall make
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow
In the dread lightning which avenges it;
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying
The consequence of what it cannot cure.
Some such thing is to be endured or done:
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,
And never any thing will move me more.
But now!—O blood, which art my father's blood,
Circling through these contaminated veins.
If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,
Could wash away the crime and punishment
By which I suffer—no, that cannot be!
Many might doubt there were a God above
Who sees and permits evil, and so die:
That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

Lucr. It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;
Yet what, I dare not guess. O my lost child,
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief
Thy sufferings from my fear.

Beatr. I hide them not.
What are the words which you would have me speak?
I, who can feign no image in my mind
Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought
Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up
In its own formless horror: of all words,

That minister to mortal intercourse,
Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell
My misery; if another ever knew
Aught like to it, she died as I will die,
And left it, as I must, without a name.
Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee
A punishment and a reward.—Oh, which
Have I deserved?

Lucr. The peace of innocence,
Till in your season you be called to heaven.
Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done
No evil. Death must be the punishment
Of crime, or the reward of trampling down
The thorns which God has strewed upon the path
Which leads us to immortality.

Beatr. Ay, death—
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.
If I must live day after day, and keep
These limbs, the unworthy temple of thy spirit,
As a foul den from which what thou abhorrest
May mock thee, unavenged—it shall not be!
Self murder?—no, that might be no escape,
For thy decree yawns like a Hell between
Our will and it. Oh! in this mortal world
There is no vindication and no law
Which can adjudge and execute the doom
Of that through which I suffer.

Enter ORSINO.

(She approaches him solemnly.) Welcome, friend!
I have to tell you that, since last we met,
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,
That neither life nor death can give me rest.
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

Ors. And what is he who has thus injured you?

Beatr. The man they call my father: a dread name.

Ors. It cannot be—

Beatr. What it can be, or not,
Forbid to think. It is, and it has been.

Advise me how it shall not be again.
 I thought to die, but a religious awe
 Restrains me, and the dread least death itself
 Might be no refuge from the consciousness
 Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak!

Ors. Accuse him of the deed, and let the law
 Avenge thee.

Beatr. O ice-hearted counsellor!
 If I could find a word that might make known
 The crime of my destroyer; and that done,
 My tongue should, like a knife, tear out the secret
 Which cankers my heart's core; ay, lay all bare,
 So that my unpolluted fame should be
 With vilest gossips a stale mouthed story
 A mock, a byeword, an astonishment:—
 If this were done, which never shall be done.
 Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,
 And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,
 Baffling belief, and overpowering speech:
 Scarce whispered, unimaginaire, wrapt
 In hideous hints—O most assured redress!

Ors. You will endure it then?

Beatr. Endure! Orsino,
 It seems your counsel is small profit.
(Turns from him, and speaks half to herself.)

Ay,

All must be suddenly resolved and done.
 What is this undistinguishable mist
 Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,
 Darkening each other?

Ors. Should the offender live?
 Triumph in his misdeeds? and make, by use,
 His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt.
 Thine element; until thou mayest become
 Utterly lost; subdued even to the hue
 Of that which thou permittest?

Beatr. (To herself) Mighty death!
 Thou double-visaged shadow! Only judge!
 Rightfullest arbiter! *(She retires absorbed in thought.)*

Lucr. If the lightning
 Of God has e'er descended to avenge—

Ors. Blaspheme not ! His high Providence commits
Its glory on this earth and their own wrongs
Into the hands of men ; if they neglect
To punish crime—

Lucr. But if one, like this wretch,
Should mock, with gold, opinion, law, and power—
If there be no appeal to that which makes
The guiltiest tremble ? if, because our wrongs,
For that they are unnatural, strange, and monstrous,
Exceed all measure of belief ?—O God !
If, for the very reasons which should make
Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs—
And we, the victims, bear worse punishment
Than that appointed for their torturer ?—

Ors. Think not
But that there is redress where there is wrong,
So we be bold enough to seize it.

Lucr. How ?
If there were any way to make all sure,
I know not—but I think it might be good
To—

Ors. Why, his late outrage to Beatrice ;
For it is such, as I but faintly guess,
As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her
Only one duty, how she may avenge :
You, but one refuge from ills ill endured ;
Me, but one counsel—

Lucr. For we cannot hope
That aid, or retribution, or resource,
Will arise thence, where every other one
Might find them with less need. (*Beatrice advances*)

Ors. Then—

Beatr. Peace, Orsino !—
And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray
That you put off, as garments overworn,
Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,
And all the fit restraints of daily life,
Which have been borne from childhood, but which now
Would be a mockery to my holier plea.
As I have said, I have endured a wrong,
Which, though it be expressionless, is such

As asks atonement, both for what is past,
 And lest I be reserved, day after day,
 To load with crimes an overburthened soul,
 And be—what ye can dream not. I have prayed
 To God, and I have talked with my own heart,
 And have unravelled my entangled will,
 And have at length determined what is right.
 Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?
 Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

Ors. I swear

To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,
 My silence, and whatever else is mine,
 To thy commands.

Lucr. You think we should devise
 His death?

Beatr. And execute what is devised,
 And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

Ors. And yet most cautious.

Lucr. For the jealous laws
 Would punish us with death and infamy
 For that which it became themselves to do.

Beatr. Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,
 What are the means?

Ors. I know two dull fierce outlaws,
 Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they
 Would trample out, for any slight caprice,
 The meanest or the noblest life. This mood
 Is marketable here in Rome. They sell
 What we now want.

Lucr. To-morrow before dawn,
 Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,
 Petrella, in the Apulian Appenines.
 If he arrive there—

Beatr. He must not arrive.

Ori. Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

Lucr. The sun will scarce be set.

Beatr. But I remember

Two miles on this side of the fort, the road
 Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,
 And winds with short turns down the precipice;
 And in its depth there is a mighty rock,

Which has, from unimaginable years,
 Sustained itself with terror and with toil
 Over a gulph, and with the agony
 With which it clings seems slowly coming down;
 Even as a wretched soul hour after hour,
 Clings to the mass of life, yet clinging, leans;
 And, leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss
 In which it fears to fall,—beneath this crag,
 Huge as despair, as if in weariness,
 The melancholy mountain yawns; below,
 You hear but see not an impetuous torrent
 Raging among the caverns, and a bridge
 Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow.
 With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag.
 Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair
 Is matted in one solid roof of shade
 By the dark ivy's twine. At noon-day here
 'Tis twilight, and at sunset, blackest night.

Ors. Before you reach that bridge, make some excuse
 For spurring on your mules, or loitering
 Until—

Beatr. What sound is that?

Lucr. Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step;
 It must be Cenci, unexpectedly
 Returned.—Make some excuse for being here.

Beatr. (*To Orsino as she goes out.*)

That step we hear approach must never pass
 The bridge of which we spoke.

(*Exeunt Lucretia and Beatrice*)

Ors. What shall I do?

Cenci must find me here, and I must bear
 The imperious inquisition of his looks
 As to what brought me hither: let me mask
 Mine own in some insane and vacant smile.

Enter GIACOMO, in a hurried manner.

How! Have you ventured hither? Know you then
 That Cenci is from home?

Giac. I sought him here,
 And now must wait till he returns.

Ors. Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

Giac. Ay,

Does my destroyer know his danger? We
Are now no more, as once, parent and child,
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed
The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe.
He has cast Nature off, who is her shield,
And Nature cast him off, who is her shame;—
And I spurn both. It is a father's throat
Which I will shake, and say I ask not gold;
I ask not happy years; nor memories
Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love;
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;
But only my fair fame; only one hoard
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,
Under the penury heaped on me by thee;
Or I will—God can understand and pardon,
Why should I speak with man?

Ors. Be calm, dear friend.

Giac. Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.
This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,
Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me,
And then denied the loan; and left me so
In poverty, the which I sought to mend
By holding a poor office in the state.
It had been promised to me, and already
I bought new clothing for my ragged babes,
And my wife smiled, and my heart knew repose;
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,
Conferred this office on a wretch whom thus
He paid for vilest service. I returned
With this ill news, and we sat sad together
Solacing our despondency with tears
Of such affection and unbroken faith
As temper life's worst bitterness; when he,
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,
Mocking our poverty, and telling us
Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.
And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,
I spoke of my wife's dowry; but he coined
A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted
The sum in secret riot; and he saw

My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.
 And when I knew the impression he had made,
 And felt my wife insult with silent scorn
 My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,
 I went forth too : but soon returned again ;
 Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught
 My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,
 " Give us clothes, father ! give us better food ;
 What you in one night squander were enough
 For months : " I looked, and saw that home was hell .
 And to that hell will I return no more
 Until mine enemy has rendered up
 Atonement, or, as he gave life to me,
 I will, reversing nature's law—

Ors. Trust me,
 The compensation which thou seekest here
 Will be denied.

Giac. Then—Are you not my friend ?
 Did you not hint at the alternative,
 Upon the brink of which you see I stand,
 The other day when we conversed together ?
 My wrongs were then less. That word parricide,
 Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

Ors. It must be fear itself, for the bare word
 Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God
 Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,
 So sanctifying it : what you devise
 Is, as it were, accomplished.

Giac. Is he dead ?

Ors. His grave is ready. Know that since we met
 Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

Giac. What outrage ?

Ors. That she speaks not, but you may
 Conceive such half conjectures as I do,
 From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief
 Of her stern brow, bent on the idle air,
 And her severe unmodulated voice,
 Drowning both tenderness and dread ; and last
 From this ; that, whilst her step-mother and I,
 Bewildered in horror, talked together
 With obscure hints ; both self-misunderstood,

THE CENC.

And darkly guessing, stumbling in our talk
Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,
She interrupted us, and with a look
Which told before she spoke it, he must die!—

Giac. It is enough. My doubts are well appeased.
There is a higher reason for the act
Than mine; there is a holier judge than I,
A more unblamed avenger. *Beatrice.*
Who, in the gentleness of thy sweet youth,
Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised
A living flower, but thou hast pitied it
With needless tears!—fair sister, thou in whom
Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom
Did not destroy each other!—is there made
Ravage of thee. O heart, I ask no more
Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,
Till he return, and stab him at the door?

Ors. Not so; some accident might interpose
To rescue him from what is now most sure;
And you are unprovided where to fly,
How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:
All is contrived; success is so assured
That—

Enter BEATRICE.

Beatr. 'Tis my brother's voice! You know me no.
Giac. My sister, my lost sister!

Beatr. Lost, indeed!

I see Orsino has talked with you, and
That you conjecture things too horrible
To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not
He might return; yet kiss me; I shall know
That then thou hast consented to his death.
Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,
Brotherly love, justice, and clemency,
And all things that make tender, hardest hearts,
Make thine hard, brother. Answer not: farewell.
(*Exeunt severally.*)

SCENE II.

A mean apartment in GIACOMO's house. GIACOMO alone.

Giac. 'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.

(Thunder, and the sound of a storm.)

What ! can the everlasting elements
 Feel with a worm like man ? If so, the shaft
 Of mercy-winged lightning would not fall
 On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep :
 They are now living in unmeaning dreams :
 But I must wake, still doubting if that deed
 Be just which was most necessary. O
 Thou un replenished lamp ! whose narrow fire
 Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
 Devouring darkness hovers ! Thou small flame,
 Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,
 Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,
 Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail, and be
 As thou hadst never been ! So wastes and sinks
 Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine :
 But that no power can fill with vital oil
 That broken lamp of flesh. Ha ! 'tis the blood
 Which fed these veins, that ebbs till all is cold :
 It is the form that moulded mine, that sinks
 Into the white and yellow spasms of death :
 It is the soul by which mine was arrayed
 In God's immortal likeness, which now stands
 Naked before Heaven's judgment seat ! *(a bell strikes)*

One ! Two !

The hour crawls on ; and, when my hairs are white,
 My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,
 Tortured between just hate and vain remorse ;
 Chiding the tardy messenger of news
 Like those which I expect. I almost wish
 He be not dead, although my wrongs are great ;
 Yet—'tis Orsino's step—

Enter ORSINO

Ors. I am come
 To say he has escaped.

Giac. Escaped!

Ors. And safe

Within Petrella. He pass'd by the spot
Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

Giac. Are we the fools of such contingencies?
And do we waste in blind misgivings thus
The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,
Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter
With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth
Will ne'er repent of aught, designed or done,
But my repentance.

Ors. See, the lamp is out.

Giac. If no remorse is ours when the dim air
Has drunk this innocent flame, why should we quail
When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits
See the worse deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?
No, I am hardened.

Ors. Why, what need of this?

Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse
In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.
But light the lamp; let us not talk i'the dark.

Giac. (*lighting the lamp.*)

And yet, once quenched, I cannot thus relume
My father's life: do you not think his ghost
Might plead that argument with God?

Ors. Once gone,

You cannot now recal your sister's peace;
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope;
Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;
Nor your dead mother; nor—

Giac. Oh, speak no more!

I am resolved, although this very hand
Must quench the life that animated it.

Ors. There is no need of that. Listen: you know
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella
In old Colonna's time; him whom your father
Degraded from his post; and Marzio,
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due

Giac. I knew Olimpio ; and they say he hated
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage
His lips grew white only to see him pass.
Of Marzio I know nothing.

Ors. Marzio's hate
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,
But in your name, and as at your request,
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

Giac. Only to talk ?

Ors. The moments which even now
Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour
May memorise their flight with death : ere then
They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,
And made an end—

Giac. Listen ! What sound is that ? [nought else.

Ors. The house-dog moans, and the beams crack :

Giac. It is my wife complaining in her sleep :
I doubt not she is saying bitter things
Of me ; and all my children round her dreaming
That I deny them sustenance.

Ors. Whilst he
Who truly took it from them, and who fills
Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps
Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly
Mocks thee in visions of successful hate
Too like the truth of day.

Giac. If e'er he wakes
Again, I will not trust to hireling hands—

Ors. Why, that were well I must be gone ; good night.
When next we meet may all be done !

Giac. And all
Forgotten. Oh, that I had never been ! (Exit,)

—00—

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

An apartment in the castle of Petrella. Enter CENCI.

Cen. She comes not ; yet I left her even now

Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty
 Of her delay : yet what if threats are vain ?
 Am I not now within Petrella's moat ?
 Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome ?
 Might I not drag her by the golden hair ?
 Stamp on her ? Keep her sleepless till her brain
 Be overworn ? Tame her with chains and famine ?
 Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone
 What I most seek ! No, 'tis her stubborn will,
 Which, by its own consent, shall stoop as low
 As that which drags it down.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Thou loathed wretch,
 Hide thee from my abhorrence ! fly, begone !
 Yet stay ! Bid Beatrice come hither.

Lucr. O

Husband, I pray, for thine own wretched sake,
 Heed what thou doest. A man who walks like thee
 Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,
 Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.
 And thou art old ; thy hairs are hoary grey.
 As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,
 Pity thy daughter : give her to some friend
 In marriage : so that she may tempt thee not
 To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

Cen. What ! like her sister, who has found a home
 To mock my hate from with prosperity ?
 Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee
 And all that yet remain. My death may be
 Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,
 Bid her come hither, and before my mood
 Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.

Lucr. She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence
 She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance ;
 And in that trance she heard a voice which said,
 " Cenci must die ! Let him confess himself !
 " Even now the accusing angel waits to hear
 " If God, to punish his enormous crimes,
 " Harden his dying heart !"

Cen. Why—such things are :

No doubt divine revealings may be made.
 'Tis plain I have been favoured from above,
 For when I cursed my sons they died—Ay—so—
 As to the right or wrong that's talk—repentance—
 Repentance is an easy moment's work,
 And more depends on God than me. Well—well—
 I must give up the greater point, which was
 To poison and corrupt her soul.

(A pause; *Lucretia approaches anxiously, and then shrinks back as he speaks.*) One, two:

Ay—Rocco and Cristofano my curse
 Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find
 Life a worse hell than that beyond the grave:
 Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,
 Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo,
 He is so innocent, I will bequeath
 The memory of these deeds, and make his youth
 The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts
 Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.
 When all is done, out in the wide Campagna
 I will pile up my silver and my gold;
 My costly robes, paintings, and tapestries;
 My parchments and all records of my wealth;
 And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave
 Of my possessions nothing but my name;
 Which shall be an inheritance to strip
 Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,
 My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign
 Into the hands of him who wielded it.
 Be it for its own punishment or theirs,
 He will not ask it of me till the lash
 Be broken in its last and deepest wound,
 Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,
 Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make
 Short work and sure— (going.)

Lucr. (stops him.) Oh, stay! It was a feint.
 She had no vision, and she heard no voice.
 I said it but to awe thee.

Cen. That is well.

Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,
 Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!

For Beatrice, worse terrors are in store,
To bend her to my will.

Lucr. Oh! to what will?

What cruel sufferings, more than she has known,
Canst thou inflict?

Cen. Andrea, go call my daughter.
And if she comes not tell her that I come.
What sufferings? I will drag her step by step,
Through infamies unheard of among men:
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon
Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,
One among which shall be—What?—Canst thou guess
She shall become (for what she most abhors
Shall have a fascination to entrap
Her loathing will) to her own conscious self
All she appears to others; and, when dead,
As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,
A rebel to her father and her God,
Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds,
Her name shall be the terror of the earth:
Her spirit shall approach the throne of God
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

Enter ANDREA

Andr. The lady Beatrice—

Cen. Speak, pale slave! What
Said she?

Andr. My Lord, 'twas what she looked. *She said:*

"Go, tell my father that I see the gulph

"Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,—

"I will not."

(Exit Andrea.)

Cen. Go thou quick, Lucretia;

Tell her to come; yet let her understand

Her coming is consent: and say, moreover,

That if she come not I will curse her. *(Exit Lucretia.)*

Ha!

With what but with a father's curse doth God
Panic-strike armed victory, and make pale
Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father
Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,

Be he who asks even what men call me.
Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers
Awe her before I speak?—for I on them
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Well? what? Speak, wretch!

Lucr. She said, "I cannot come;
"Go tell my father that I see a torrent
"Of his own blood raging between us."

Cen. (kneeling.) God!
Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,
Which thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,
This particle of my divided being;
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,
Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil,
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant
To aught good use; if her bright loveliness
Was kindled to illumine this dark world;
If, nursed by thy selectest dew of love,
Such virtues blossom in her as should make
The peace of life, I pray thee, for my sake,
As thou the common God and Father art
Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!
Earth, in the name of God, let her food be
Poison, until she be encrusted round
With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head
The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,
Till she be speckled like a toad: parch up
Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs
To loathed lameness! Ail beholding-sun,
Strike in thy envy those life-darting eyes
With thine own blinding beams!

Lucr. Peace! Peace!
For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.
When high God grants, he punishes such prayers.
*Cen. (leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards
Heaven.)*

He does his will, I mine! This in addition,
That, if she have a child—

Lucr. Horrible thought!

Cen. That if she ever have a child ; and thou,
Quick Nature ! I adjure thee by thy God,
That thou be fruitful in her, and increase
And multiply, fulfilling his command,
And my deep imprecation ! May it be
A hideous likeness of herself ; that, as
From a distorting mirror, she may see
Her image mixed with what she most abhors,
Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.
And that the child may from its infancy
Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,
Turning her mother's love to misery ;
And that both she and it may live, until
It shall repay her care and pain with hate,
Or, what may else be more unnatural.
So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs
Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.
Shall I revoke this curse ? Go, bid her come,
Before my words are chronicled in heaven. (*Exit Lucr.*)
I do not feel as if I were a man,
But like a fiend appointed to chastise
The offences of some unremembered world,
My blood is running up and down my veins :
A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle :
I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe ;
My heart is beating with an expectation
Of horrid joy.

Enter LUCRETIA.

What ? Speak !

Lucr. She bids thee curse :
And if thy curses, as they cannot do,
Could kill her soul—

Cen. She would not come. 'Tis well,
I can do both : first take what I demand,
And then extort concession. To thy chamber !
Fly ere I spurn thee : and beware this night
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer
To come between the tiger and his prey. (*Exit Lucr.*)
It must be late ; mine eyes grow weary dim
With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.

2/

Conscience! O thou most insolent of lies!
 They say that sleep, that healing dew of heaven,
 Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain
 Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go,
 First to belie thee with an hour of rest,
 Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then—
 O multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake
 Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!
 There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven
 As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth
 All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things
 Shall, with a spirit of unnatural life,
 Stir and be quickened, even as I am now. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

Before the castle of Petrella. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA above, on the ramparts.

Beatr. They come not yet.

Lucr. 'Tis scarce midnight.

Beatr. How slow

Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,
 Lags leaden-footed time!

Lucr. The minutes pass—
 If he should wake before the deed is done?

Beatr. O mother! he must never wake again.
 What thou hast said persuades me that our act
 Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell
 Out of a human form.

Lucr. 'Tis true he spoke
 Of death and judgment with strange confidence
 For one so wicked; as a man believing
 In God, yet recking not of good or ill.
 And yet to die without confession!

Beatr. Oh!
 Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,
 And will not add our dread necessity
 To the amount of his offences.

Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO below.

Lucr. See,
They come.

Beatr. All mortal things must hasten thus
To their dark end. Let us go down.

(Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE from above.)

Olim. How feel you to this work?

Mar. As one who thinks

A thousand crowns excellent market price
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.

Olim. It is the white reflection of your own,
Which you call pale.

Mar. Is that their natural hue?

Olim. Or 'tis my hate, and the deferred desire
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

Mar. You are inclined then to this business?

Olim. Ay,

If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,
I could not be more willing.

Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA below.

Noble ladies!

Beatr. Are ye resolved?

Olim. Is he asleep?

Mar. Is all
Quiet?

Lucr. I mixed an opiate with his drink.
He sleeps so soundly—

Beatr. That his death will be
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,
A dark continuance of the Hell within him,
Which God extinguish! But are ye resolved?
Ye know it is a high and holy deed.

Olim. We are resolved.

Mar. As to the how this act
Be warranted, it rests with you.

Beatr. Well, follow!

Olim. Hush! hark! What noise is that?

Mar. Ha! some one comes!

Beatr. Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow !
And be your steps like mine, light, quick, and bold.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

*An apartment in the castle. Enter BEATRICE and
LUCRETIA.*

Lucr. They are about it now.

Beatr. Nay, it is done.

Lucr. I have not heard him groan.

Beatr. He will not groan.

Lucr. What sound is that ?

Beatr. List ! 'tis the tread of feet
About his bed.

Lucr. My God !

If he be now a cold stiff corpse !

Beatr. Oh, fear not

What may be done, but what is left undone :
The act seals all.

Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.

Is it accomplished ?

Mar. What ?

Olim. Did you not call ?

Beatr. When ?

Olim. Now.

Beatr. I ask if all is over ?

Olim. We dare not kill an old and sleeping man ;
His thin grey hair, his stern and reverend brow,
His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,
And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,
Quelled me— Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

Mar. But I was bolder ; for I chid Olimpio,
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave,
And leave me the reward. And now my knife

Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man
 Stirred in his sleep, and said, " God ! hear, Oh hear
 A father's curse ! What ! art thou not our father ?"
 And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost
 Of my dead father speaking through his lips,
 And could not kill him.

Beatr. Miserable slaves !

Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,
 Found ye the boldness to return to me
 With such a deed undone ? Base palterers !
 Cowards and traitors ! Why, the very conscience
 Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge
 Is an equivocation : it sleeps over
 A thousand daily acts disgracing men :
 And when a deed were mercy, insults heaven——
 Why do I talk ?

(Snatching a dagger from one of them, and raising it.)

Hadst thou a tongue to say,

She murdered her own father, I must do it !
 But never dream ye shall outlive him long !

Olim. Stop, for God's sake !

Mar. I will go back and kill him.

Olim. Give me the weapon ; we must do thy will.

Beatr. Take it !—Depart ! Return !

(Exeunt Olim. and Mar.)

How pale thou art !

We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime
 To leave undone.

Lucr. Would it were done !

Beatr. Even whilst

That doubt is passing through your mind, the world
 Is conscious of a change. Darkness and hell
 Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth
 To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath
 Comes, methinks, lighter, and the gelid blood
 Runs freely through my veins. Hark !

Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.

He is——

Olim. Dead :

Mar. We strangled him that there might be no blood

And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden
Under the balcony ; 'twill seem it fell.

Beatr. (*Giving them a bag of coin.*)

Here, take this gold, and hasten to your homes.

And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed

By that which made me tremble, wear thou this !

(*Clothes him in a rich mantle.*)

It was the mantle which my grandfather

Wore in his high prosperity, and men

Envied his state : so may they envy thine.

Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God

To a just use. Live long and thrive ! and, mark,

If thou hast crimes, repent : this deed is none.

(*A horn is sounded.*)

Lucr. Hark ! 'tis the castle horn ; my God ! it sounds
Like the last trump.

Beatr. Some tedious guest is coming.

Lucr. The drawbridge is let down ; there is a tramp
Of horses in the court ; fly, hide yourselves !

(*Exeunt Olim. and Mar.*)

Beatr. Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest.

I scarcely need to counterfeit it now :

The spirit which doth reign within these limbs

Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep

Fearless and calm : all ill is surely past. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV.

*Another apartment in the castle. Enter on one side the
Legate SAVELLA, introduced by a servant, and on the
other LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

Sav. Lady, my duty to his Holiness

Be my excuse that thus unseasonably

I break upon your rest. I must speak with

Count Cenci : doth he sleep ?

Lucr. (*in a hurried and confused manner.*)

I think he sleeps ;

Yet, wake him not, I pray. Spare me awhile.

He is a wicked and a wrathful man.

Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,
Which if, I know, a hell of angry dreams.
It were not well; indeed it were not well.
Wait till day break—

(*aside*) Oh, I am deadly sick!

Sav. I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count
Must answer charges of the gravest import,
And suddenly: such my commission is.

Lucr. (*with increased agitation.*)

I dare not rouse him: I know none who dare:
'Twere perilous—you might as safely waken
A serpent, or a corpse in which some fiend
Were laid to sleep.

Sav. Lady, my moments here
Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,
Since none else dare.

Lucr. (*aside*) O terror! O despair! (To Bernardo.)
Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to
Your father's chamber. (Exeunt Sav. and Bern.)

Enter BEATRICE.

Beatr. 'Tis a messenger
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands
Before the throne of an unappealable God,
Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,
Acquit our deed.

Lucr. O agony of fear!
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard
The Legate's followers whisper, as they passed,
They had a warrant for his instant death.
All was prepared by unforbidden means,
Which we must pay so dearly, having done.
Even now they search the tower, and find the body:
Now they suspect the truth: now they consult
Before they come to tax us with the fact.
O horrible, 'tis all discovered!

Beatr. Mother,
What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold
As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child
To fear that others know what thou hast done,
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus

Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks
 All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,
 And fear no other witness but thy fear.
 For if, as cannot be, some circumstance
 Should rise in accusation, we can blind
 Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,
 Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,
 As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,
 And what may follow now regards not me.
 I am as universal as the light;
 Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm
 As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,
 Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock,
 But shakes it not. *(A cry within and tumult.*
Voices. Murder! murder! murder!

Enter BERNARDO and SAVELLA.

Sav. (To his followers)

Go search the castle round; sound the alarm;
 Look to the gates, that none escape.

Beatr. What now?

Ber. I know not what to say: my father's dead!

*Beatr. How! dead? he only sleeps: you mistake
 brother.*

His sleep is very calm, very like death;
 'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.
 He is not dead!

Ber. Dead! murdered!

Lucr. (with extreme agitation.) Oh, no, no,
 He is not murdered, though he may be dead;
 I have alone the keys of those apartments.

Sav. Ha! Is it so?

*Beatr. My Lord, I pray excuse us;
 We will retire; my mother is not well:
 She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.*

(Exeunt Lucr. and Beatr.)

Sav. Can you suspect who may have murdered him?

Ber. I know not what to think.

*Sav. Can you name any
 Who had an interest in his death?*

Ber. Alas!

I can name none who had not, and those most
 Who most lament that such a deed is done ;
 My mother, and my sister, and myself.

Sav. 'Tis strange ! There were clear marks of violence.
 I found the old man's body in the moonlight
 Hanging beneath the window of his chamber,
 Among the branches of a pine : he could not
 Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped
 And effortless : 'tis true there was no blood.
 Favour me, Sir, (it much imports your house
 That all should be made clear) to tell the ladies
 That I request their presence. (Exit Ber.)

Enter Guards, bringing in MARZIO.

Guard. We have one.

Officer. My Lord, we found this ruffian and another
 Lurking among the rocks ; there is no doubt
 But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci :
 Each had a bag of coin. This fellow wore
 A gold-inwoven robe, which, shining bright
 Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon,
 Betrayed them to our notice : the other fell
 Desperately fighting.

Sav. What does he confess ? [on him]

Officer. He keeps firm silence ; but these lines found
 May speak.

Sav. Their language is at least sincere. (reads.)

" TO THE LADY BEATRICE.

" That the atonement of what my nature sickens to
 conjecture may soon arrive, I send thee, at thy brother's
 desire, those who will speak and do more than I dare
 write—

Thy devoted servant,

ORSINO.^a

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and BERNARDO.

Knowest thou this writing, Lady ?

Beatr. No

Sav. Nor thou ?

Lucr. (Her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation.)

Where was it found? what is it? It should be
Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror
Which never yet found utterance, but which made
Between that hapless child and her dead father
A gulph of obscure hatred.

Sav. Is it so?

Is it true, Lady, that thy father did
Such outrages as to awaken in thee
Unfilial hate?

Beatr. Not hate, 'twas more than hate:

This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

Sav. There is a deed demanding question done;

Thou hast a secret which will answer ~~not~~. [and rash.

Beatr. What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold

Sav. I do arrest all present in the name

Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

Lucr. Oh, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty.

Beatr. Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,
I am more innocent of parricide
Than is a child born fatherless. Dear mother,
Your gentleness and patience are no shield
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,
Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,
Rather will ye who are their ministers,
Bar all access to retribution first,
And then, when heaven doth interpose to do
What ye neglect, arming familiar things
To the redress of an unwonted crime,
Make ye the victims who demanded it,
Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch,
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,
If it be true he murdered Cenci, was
A sword in the right hand of justest God.
Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name
God therefore scruples to avenge.

Sav. You own

That you desired his death?

Beatr. It would have been

A crime no less than his, if, for one moment,
 That fierce desire had faded in my heart.
 'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray.
 Ay, I even knew—for God is wise and just,
 That some strange sudden death hung over him.
 'Tis true that this did happen, and most true
 There was no other rest for me on earth,
 No other hope in Heaven: now what of this? [are both.
Sav. Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here
 I judge thee not.

Beatr. And yet, if you arrest me,
 You are the judge and executioner
 Of that which is the life of life: the breath
 Of accusation kills an innocent name,
 And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life
 Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false
 That I am guilty of foul parricide;
 Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,
 That other hands have sent my father's soul
 To ask the mercy he denied to me.
 Now leave us free: stain not a noble house
 With vague surmises of rejected crime;
 Add to our sufferings and your own neglect
 No heavier sum; let them have been enough.
 Leave us the wreck we have.

Sav. I dare not, Lady.
 I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:
 There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

Lucr. Oh, not to Rome! Oh, take us not to Rome!

Beatr. Why not to Rome, dear mother? There as here
 Our innocence is as an armed heel
 To trample accusation. God is there
 As here, and with his shadow ever clothe
 The innocent, the injured, and the weak;
 And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady; lean
 On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,
 As soon as you have taken some refreshment,
 And have all such examinations made
 Upon the spot as may be necessary
 To the full understanding of this matter,
 We shall be ready. Mother, will you come?

Lucr. Ha ! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest
 Self-accusation from our agony !
 Will Giacomo be there ? Orsino ? Marzio ?
 All present ? all confronted ? all demanding
 Each from the other's countenance the thing
 Which is in every heart ? O misery !

(She faints, and is borne out.)

Sav. She faints : an ill appearance this.

Beatr. My Lord,

She knows not yet the uses of the world.
 She fears that power is as a beast which grasps
 And loosens not, a snake whose look transmutes
 All things to guilt which is its nutriment.
 She cannot know how well the supine slaves
 Of blind authority read the truth of things
 When written on a brow of guilelessness :
 She sees not yet triumphant Innocence
 Stand at the judgment-seat of mortal man,
 A judge and an accuser of the wrong
 Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord ;
 Our suite will join yours in the court below. *(Exeunt.)*

— 00 —

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*An apartment in ORSINO'S Palace. Enter ORSINO and
 GIACOMO.*

Giac. Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end ?
 Oh, that the vain remorse which must chastise
 Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn
 As its keen sting is mortal to avenge !
 Oh, that the hour when present, had cast off
 The mantle of its mystery, and shewn
 The ghastly form with which it now returns
 When its sacred game is roused, cheering the hounds
 Of conscience to their prey ! Alas ! alas !
 It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,
 To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

Ors. It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

Giac. To violate the sacred doors of sleep ;
To cheat kind nature of the placid death
Which she prepares for over-wearied age ;
To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul,
Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers
A life of burning crimes—

Ors. You cannot say
I urged you to the deed.

Giac. Oh, had I never
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance
The mirror of my darkest thoughts ; hadst thou
Never with hints and questions made me look
Upon the monster of my thought, until
It grew familiar to desire—

Ors. 'Tis thus
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts
Upon the abettors of their own resolve :
Or any thing but their weak guilty selves.
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness
Of penitence ; confess 'tis fear disguised
From its own shame that takes the mantle now
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe ?

Giac. How can that be ? Already Beatrice,
Lucretia, and the murderer, are in prison.
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,
Sent to arrest us.

Ors. I have all prepared
For instant flight. We can escape even now.
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

Giac. Rather expire in tortures, as I may.
What ! will you cast by self-accusing flight
Assured conviction upon Beatrice ?
She, who alone, in this unnatural work,
Stands like God's angel ministered upon
By fiends ; avenging such a nameless wrong
As turns black parricide to piety ;
Whilst we for basest ends—I fear, Orsino,
While I consider all your words and looks,
Comparing them with your proposal now,

That you must be a villain. For what end
 Could you engage in such a perilous crime,
 Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,
 Even to this gulph? Thou art no liar? No,
 Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!
 Coward and slave! But, no, defend thyself; (*drawing*,
 Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue
 Disdains to brand thee with.

Ors. Put up your weapon.

Is it the desperation of your fear
 Makes you thus rash and sudden with a friend,
 Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger
 Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed
 Was but to try you. As for me, I think
 Thankless affection led me to this point,
 From which, if my firm temper could repent,
 I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak
 The ministers of justice wait below:
 They grant me these brief moments. Now, if you
 Have any word of melancholy comfort
 To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass
 Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

Giac. O generous friend! how canst thou pardon me?
 Would that my life could purchase thine!

Ors. That wish

Now comes a day too late. Haste: fare thee well!
 Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor, (*Exit Giacomo*.)
 I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting
 At his own gate, and such was my contrivance
 That I might rid me both of him and them.
 I thought to act a solemn comedy
 Upon the painted scene of this new world,
 And to attain my own peculiar ends
 By some such plot of mingled good and ill
 As others weave; but there arose a Power
 Which grasp'd and snapp'd the threads of my device,
 And turned it to a net of ruin—Ha! (*a shout is heard*.)
 Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad?
 But I will pass, wrapt in a vile disguise;
 Rags on my back, and a false innocence
 Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd

Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then
 For a new name and for a country new,
 And a new life, fashioned on old desires,
 To change the honours of abandoned Rome.
 And these must be the masks of that within,
 Which must remain unaltered. Oh, I fear
 That what is past will never let me rest!
 Why, when none else is conscious but myself
 Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt
 Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly
 My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave
 Of—what? A word? which those of this false world
 Employ against each other, not themselves;
 As men wear daggers not for self-offence.
 But if I am mistaken, where shall I
 Find the disguise to hide from myself,
 As now I skulk from every other eye? (Exit.)

SCENE II.

A Hall of Justice. CAMILLO, Judges, &c. are discovered seated. MARZIO is led in.

1st Judge. Accused, do you persist in your denial?
2nd Judge. Ask you, are you innocent or guilty?
3rd Judge. Demand who were the participators
 In your offence? Speak truth, and the whole truth.

Mar. My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing.
 Olimpio sold the robe to me from which
 You would infer my guilt.

2nd Judge. Away with him! [kiss,

1st Judge. Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's
 Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,
 That you would handy lover's talk with it
 Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

Mar. Spare me! O spare! I will confess.

1st Judge. Then speak.

Mar. I strangled him in his sleep.

1st Judge. Who urged you to it?

Mar. His own son Giacomo, and the young preizts

Orsino sent me to Petrella ; there
 The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia
 Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I
 And my companion forthwith murdered him.
 Now let me die.

1st Judge. This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,
 Lead forth the prisoners.

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded,

Look upon this man ;
 When did you see him last ?

Beatr. We never saw him.

Mar. You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

Beatr. I know thee ! How ? where ? when ?

Mar. You know 'twas I

Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes
 To kill your father. When the thing was done
 You clothed me in a robe of woven gold
 And bade me thrive : how I have thriven, you see.
 You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,
 You know that what I speak is true.

*(Beatrice advances towards him ; he covers his face,
 and shrinks back.)*

Oh, dart

The terrible resentment of those eyes
 On the dead earth ! Turn them away from me !
 They wound : 'twas torture forced the truth. My Lords,
 Having said this, let me be led to death.

Beatr. Poor wretch, I pity thee : yet stay awhile.

Cam. Guards, lead him not away.

Beatr. Cardinal Camillo,

You have a good repute for gentleness
 And wisdom : can it be that you sit here
 To countenance a wicked farce like this ?
 When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged
 From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart,
 And bade to answer, not as he believes,
 But as those may suspect, or do desire,
 Whose questions thence suggest their own reply :
 And that in peril of such hideous torments

As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now
 The thing you surely know, which is, that you
 If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,
 And you were told: "Confess that you did poison
 Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child
 Who was the loadstar of your life:"—and though
 All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
 That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
 And all the things hoped for or done therein
 Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,
 Yet you would say, "I confess any thing:"
 And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,
 The refuge of dishonourable death.
 I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert
 My innocence.

Cam. (much moved.) What shall we think, my Lords?
 Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen
 Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul
 That she is guiltless.

Judge. She must be tortured.

Cam. I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew
 (If he now lived he would be just her age;
 His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes
 Like her's in shape, but blue and not so deep)
 As that most perfect image of God's love
 That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.
 She is as pure as speechless infancy.

Judge. Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord.
 If you forbid the rack. His Holiness
 Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime
 By the severest forms of law; nay, even,
 To stretch a point against the criminals.
 The prisoners stand accused of parricide
 Upon such evidence as justifies
 Torture.

Beatr. What evidence? This man's?

Judge. Even so.

[chosen forth

Beatr. (to Marzio.) Come near. And who art thou thus
 Out of the multitude of living men
 To kill the innocent?

Mar. I am Marzio,

Thy father's vassal.

Beatr. Fix thine eyes on mine ;

Answer to what I ask. *(turning to the Judges.)*

I prithee mark

His countenance : unlike bold calumny
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends
His gaze on the blind earth.

(To Marzio.) What ! wilt thou say

That I did murder my own father ?

Mar. Oh !

Spare me ! My brain swims round—I cannot speak—
It was that horrid torture forced the truth.
Take me away ! Let her not look on me !
I am a guilty miserable wretch ;
I have said all I know ; now let me die !

Beatr. My Lords, if by my nature I had been
So stern as to have planned the crime alleged,
Which your suspicious dictate to this slave,
And the rack makes him utter, do you think
I should have left this two-edged instrument
Of my misdeed ; this man, this bloody knife
With my own name engraven on the hilt
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,
For my own death ? That, with such horrible need
For deepest silence, I should have neglected
So trivial a precaution, as the making
His tomb the keeper of a secret written
On a thief's memory ? What is his poor life ?
What are a thousand lives ? A parricide
(turning to MARZIO.)

And thou—

Hast trampled them like dust ; and see, he lives !

Mar. Oh, spare me ! Speak to me no more !
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,
Wound worse than torture.

(To the Judges.) I have told it all ;

For pity's sake lead me away to death.

Cam. Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice.
He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

Beatr. O thou, who tremblest on the giddy verge
Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me ;
So mayst thou answer God with less dismay,
What evil have we done thee : I, alas !
Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,
And so my lot was ordered, that a father
First turned the moments of awakening life
To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope ; and then
Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul
And my untainted fame, and even that peace
Which sleeps within the core of my heart's heart.
But the wound was not mortal : so my hate
Became the only worship I could lift
To our great Father, who in pity and love
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off ;
And thus his wrong becomes my accusation :
And art thou the accuser ? If thou hopest
Mercy in heaven, shew justice upon earth :
Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.
If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path
Over the trampled laws of God and man,
Rush not before thy Judge, and say, " My Maker,
" I have done this and more ; for there was one
" Who was most pure and innocent on earth.
" And because she endured what never any,
" Guilty or innocent, endured before ;
" Because her wrongs could not be told, nor thought :
" Because thy hand at length did rescue her ;
" I with my words killed her and all her kin."
Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay
The reverence living in the minds of men
Towards our ancient house and stainless fame !
Think what it is to strangle infant pity,
Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,
Till it become a crime to suffer. Think
What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood
All that which shews like innocence, and is,
Hear me, Great God ! I swear, most innocent,
So that the world lose all discrimination
Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,
And that which now compels thee to reply

To what I ask. Am I, or am I not,
A parricide?

Mar. Thou art not!

Judge. What is this?

Mar. I here declare those whom I did accuse
Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

Judge. Drag him away to torments; let them be
Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds
Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not
Till he confess.

Mar. Torture me as ye will.
A keener pang has wrung a higher truth
From my last breath. She is most innocent!
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me;
I will not give you that fine piece of nature
To rend and ruin. (*Exit Marzio, guarded.*)

Cam. What say ye now, my Lords?

Judge. Let tortures strain the truth till it be white
As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind.

Cam. Yet stained with blood.

Judge. (*To Beatrice.*) Know you this paper, Lady?

Beatr. Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,
Who art my judge! Accuser, witness, judge,
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name.
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.
What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,
And therefore on the chance that it may be
Some evil, will ye kill us?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Marzio's dead.

Judge. What did he say?

Officer. Nothing. As soon as we
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,
As one who baffles a deep adversary;
And, holding his breath, died.

Judge. There remains nothing
But to apply the question to these prisoners,
Who yet remain stubborn

Cam. I overrule

Further proceedings, and in the behalf
Of these most innocent and noble persons
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

Judge. Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Mean-
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells; [while
And be the engines ready: for this night,
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,
Pious, and just, as once, I'll wring the truth
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

The cell of a prison. BEATRICE is discovered asleep in a couch. Enter BERNARDO.

Ber. How gently slumber rests upon her face,
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.
After such torments as she bore last night,
How light and soft her breathing comes. Ah, me!
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.
But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest
From this sweet folded flower, thus—wake! awake;
What, sister, canst thou sleep?

Beatr. (*awaking.*) I was just dreaming
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest,
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise
After our father's presence.

Ber. Dear, dear sister,
Would that thy dream were not a dream! O God!
How shall I tell?

Beatr. What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

Ber. Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst
I stand considering what I have to say
My heart will break.

Beatr. See now, thou mak'st me weep:
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

Ber. They have confessed, they could endure no more
The tortures—

Beatr. Ha! What was there to confess?
They must have told some weak and wicked lie
To flatter their tormentors. Have they said
That they were guilty? O white innocence,
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide
Thine awful and serenest countenance
From those who know thee not!

Enter JUDGE with LUCRETIA and GIACOMO, guarded.

Igaoble hearts!

For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,
Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust,
And that eternal honour which should live,
Sun-like, above the reck of mortal fame,
Changed to a mockery and a bye-word? What.
Will you give up these bodies to be dragged
At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep
The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,
Who, that they may make our calamity
Their worship and their spectacle, will leave
The churches and the theatres as void
As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude
Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,
Sad funeral flow'rs to deck a living corpse,
Upon us as we pass to pass away,
And leave—what memory of our having been?
Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou,
Who wert a mother to the parentless,
Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,
And let us each be silent as a corpse;
It soon will be as soft as my grave.
'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear
Makes the rack cruel.

Giac. They will tear the truth
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:
For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.

Lucr. Oh, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die.

And after death God is our judge, not they ;
He will have mercy on us.

Eer. If indeed

it can be true, say so, dear sister mine ;
And then the Pope will surely pardon you,
And all be well.

Judge. Confess, or I will wrap
Your limbs with such keen tortures—

Beatr. Tortures! Turn

The rack henceforth into a spinning wheel !
Torture your dog, that he may tell when last
He lapped the blood his master shed—not me !
My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,
And of the soul ; ay, of the inmost soul,
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall
To see, in this ill world where none are true,
My kindred false to their deserted selves ;
And with considering all the wretched life
Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,
And the small justice shewn by Heaven and Earth
To me or mine ; and what a tyrant thou art,
And what slaves these ; and what a world we make ;
The oppressor and the oppressed—such pangs compel
My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me ?

Judge. Art thou not guilty of thy father's death ?

Beatr. Or wilt thou rather tax high judging God
That he permitted such an act as that
Which I have suffered, and which he beheld ;
Made it unutterable, and took from it
All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,
But that which thou hast called my father's death ?
Which is or is not what men call a crime,
Which either I have done, or have not done ;
Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.
If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,
And so an end of all. Now do your will ;
No other pains shall force another word.

Judge. She is convicted, but has not confessed.
Be it enough. Until their final sentence
Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,
Linger no, here!

Beatr. Oh, tear him not away!

Judge. Guards, do your duty.

Ber. (*embracing Beatrice.*) Oh! would ye divide
Body from soul?

Officer. This is the headman's business.

(*Exeunt all but Lucr. Beatr. and Gias.*)

Gias. Have I confessed? Is it all over now?

No hope! No refuge! O weak wicked tongue,
Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been
Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have killed
My father first, and then betrayed my sister,
Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure
In this black guilty world, to that which I
So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!
Destitute, helpless, and I—Father! God!
Canst thou forgive even the unforgiving,
When their full hearts break thus, thus!

(*Covers his face, and weeps.*)

Lucr. O my child!

To what a dreadful end are we all come!
Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain
Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved
Into these fast and unavailing tears,
Which flow and feel not!

Beatr. What 'twas weak to do,
'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;
Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made
Our speedy act the angel of his wrath,
Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.
Let us not think that we shall die for this.
Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand.
You had a manly heart. Bear up! bear up!
O dearest Lady; put your gentle head
Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:
Your eyes look pale, hollow, and overworn,
With heaviness of watching and slow grief
Come, I will sing you some low sleepy tune,
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,
Some outworn and unused monotony,
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,
Till they almost forget they live: lie down

So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?
Faith! they are sadder than I thought they were.

SONG.

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep
When my life is laid asleep?
Little cares for a smile or a tear
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!
Farewell! Heigho!
What is this whispers low?
There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;
And a bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep, were death like to thee,
Or if thou couldst mortal be,
I would close these eyes of pain;
When to wake? Never again.
O World, farewell!
Listen to the passing bell
It says, thou and I must part,
With a light and a heavy heart. (*The scene closes.*)

SCENE IV

A hall of the Prison. Enter CAMILLO and BERNARDO.

Cam. The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.
He looked as calm and keen as is the engine
Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself
From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,
A rite, a law, a custom: not a man.
He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick
Of his machinery on the advocates
Presenting the defences, which he tore
And threw behind, muttering, with hoarse harsh voice:
"Which among ye defended your old father,
"Killed in his sleep?" Then to another: "Thou
"Dost this in virtue of thy place; 'tis well."
He turned to me then, looking sad deprecation,
And said these three words coldly: "They must die!"

Ber. And yet you left him not?

Cam. I urged him still;

Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.
And he replied: "Paolo Santa Croce
"Murdered his mother yester evening,
"And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife,
"That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young
"Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs,
"Authority, and power, and hoary hair,
"Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,
"You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment.
"Here is their sentence; never see me more
"Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled."

Ber. O God! not so! I did believe indeed
That all you said was but sad preparation
For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks
To bend the sternest purpose. Once I knew them:
Now I forget them at my dearest need.
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain
With my perpetual cries, until in rage
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood
May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,
And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!
Oh, wait till I return!

(rushes out.)

Cam. Alas! poor boy!
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray
To the deaf sea.

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded.

Beatr. I hardly dare to fear
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

Cam. May God in heaven be less inexorable
To the Pope's prayers than he has been to mine.
Here is the sentence and the warrant.

Beatr. (wildly.) O
My God! Can it be possible I have
To die so suddenly? So young to go

Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground !
 To be nailed down into a narrow place ;
 To see no more sweet sunshine ; hear no more
 Blithe voice of living thing ; muse not again
 Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost—
 How fearful ! To be nothing ! or to be—
 What ? Oh, where am I ? Let me not go mad !
 Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts ! If there should be
 No God, no Heaven, no Earth, in the void world ;
 The wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world !
 If all things then should be—my father's spirit,
 His eye, his voice, his touch, surrounding me ;
 The atmosphere and breath of my dead life !
 If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,
 Even the form which tortured me on earth,
 Masked in grey hairs and wrinkles, he should come
 And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix
 His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down !
 For was he not alone omnipotent
 On Earth, and ever present ? Even tho' dead,
 Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,
 And work for me and mine still the same ruin,
 Scorn, pain, despair ? Who ever yet returned
 To teach the laws of death's untrodden realm ?
 Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,
 Oh whither, whither ?

Lucr. Trust in God's sweet love,
 The tender promises of Christ : ere night,
 Think we shall be in Paradise.

Beatr. 'Tis past !

Whatever comes, my heart shall sink no more
 And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill :
 How tedious, false, and cold, seem all things. I
 Have met with much injustice in this world ;
 No difference has been made by God or man,
 Or any power moulding my wretched lot,
 'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.
 I am cut off from the only world I know,
 From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime
 You do well telling me to trust in God :
 I hope I do trust in him. In whom else

Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

(During the latter speeches, GIACOMO has retired, conversing with CAMILLO, who now goes out. GIACOMO advances.)

Giac. Know you not, mother—sister, know you not, Bernardo even now is gone to implore The Pope to grant our pardon?

Lucr. Child, perhaps
It will be granted. We may all then live
To make these woes a tale for distant years;
O what a thought! It gushes to my heart
Like the warm blood.

Beatr. Yet both will soon be cold.
Oh, trample out that thought! Worse than despair,
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:
It is the only ill which can find place
Upon the giddy, sharp, and narrow hour
Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:
Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch
Even now a city stands, fair, strong, and free;
Now stench and blackness yawn, like death. Oh, plead
With famine, or wind-walking pestilence,
Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man!
Cruel, cold, formal man! righteous in words,
In deeds a Cain. No, mother, we must die,
Since such is the reward of innocent lives,
Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.
And, whilst our murderers live, and hard cold men,
Smiling and slow, walk thro' a world of tears
To death as to life's sleep, 'twere just the grave
Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death,
And wind me in thine all-embracing arms!
Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,
And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.
Live ye, who live, subject to one another
As we were once, who now——

BERNARDO rushes in.

Ber. Oh, horrible!
hat tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,

Spoken till the heart is vacant and despairs,
 Should all be vain ! The ministers of death
 Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw
 Blood on the face of one—what if 'twere fancy ?
 Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth
 Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off
 As if 'twere only rain. O life ! O world !
 Cover me ! let me be no more ! To see
 That perfect mirror of pure innocence
 Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,
 Shivered to dust ! To see thee, Beatrice,
 Who made all lovely thou didst look upon—
 Thee, light of life—dead, dark ! while I say, sister,
 To hear I have no sister ; and thou, mother,
 Whose love was a bond to all our loves—
 Dead ! The sweet bond broken !

Enter CAMILLO and Guards.

They come ! Let me
 Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves
 Are blighted—white—cold. Say farewell, before
 Death chokes that gentle voice ! Oh, let me hear
 You speak !

Beatr. Farewell, my tender brother. Think
 Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now :
 And let mild pitying thoughts lighten for thee
 Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,
 But tears and patience. One thing more, my child,
 For thine own sake be constant to the love
 Thou bearest us ; and to the faith that I,
 Though wrapt in a strange cloud of crime and shame,
 Lived ever holy and unstained. And though
 Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name
 Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow
 For men to point at as they pass, do thou
 Forbear, and never think a thought unkind
 Of those who perhaps love thee in their graves.

So mayest thou die as I do, fear and pain
Being subdued. Farewell! farewell! farewell!

Ber. I cannot say, farewell!

Cam. O Lady Beatrice!

Beatr. Give yourself no unnecessary pain,
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, mother, tie
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair
In any simple knot; ay, that does well.
And yours I see is coming down. How often
Have we done this for one another! now
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,
We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.

DEDICATION

TO

MARY ——— ———.

—00—

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home ;
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome ;
Nor thou disdain, that, ere my fame become
A star among the stars of mortal night,
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and light.

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour
Is ended,—and the fruit is at thy feet !
No longer where the woods to frame a hower
With interlaced branches mix and meet,
Or where, with sound like many voices sweet,
Water-falls leap among wild islands green,
Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat
Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen :
But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when
first

The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.
I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirits' sleep : a fresh May-dawn it was,
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why, until there rose
From the near school-room voices, that, 'alas !'
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And then I clasped my hands and looked around—
—But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—
So without shame I spake:—"I will be wise;
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach or check." I then controlled
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn, but from that secret store
Wrought linked armour for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among mankind,
Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
Within me, till there came upon my mind
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

Alas! that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one!—
Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world in which I moved alone:—
Yet never found I one not false to me,
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone
Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived by thee.

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart
Fell like bright Spring upon some herbless plain,
How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds among,
Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long.

No more alone through the world's wilderness.
Although I trod the paths of high intent,
I journeyed now : no more companionless,
Where solitude is like despair, I went.—
There is the wisdom of a stern content
When Poverty can blight the just and good,
When Infamy dares mock the innocent,
And cherished friends turn with the multitude
To trample : this was ours, and we unshaken stood !

Now has descended a serener hour,
And with inconstant fortune friends return ·
Thou suffering leaves the knowledge and the power
Which says :—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.
And from thy side two gentle babes are born
To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn :
And these delights, and thou, have been to me
The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain ?
Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,
Tho' it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,
And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway
Holier than was Amphion's ? I would fain
Reply in hope—but I am worn away,
And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey.

And what art thou ? I know, but dare not speak :
Time may interpret to his silent years,
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears :
And thro' thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally,

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
 Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
 I wonder not—for One then left this earth
 Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
 Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
 Of its departing glory ; still her fame
 Shines on thee thro' the tempests dark and wild
 Which shake these latter days ; and thou canst claim
 The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name,

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,
 Which was the echo of three thousand years ;
 And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,
 As some lone man who in a desert hears
 The music of his home :—unwonted fears
 Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,
 And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,
 Like thunder-stricken dragons, for apace
 Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind !
 If there must be no response to my cry—
 If men must rise and stamp with fury blind
 On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,
 Sweet friend ! can look from our tranquillity
 Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—
 Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by
 Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,
 That burn from year to year with unextinguished light

THE
REVOLT OF ISLAM.

—00—

CANTO I.

—

WHEN the last hope of trampled France had failed
Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled
The peak of an aerial promontory,
Whose caverned base with the vext surge was hoary,
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken
Each cloud and every wave:—but transitory
The calm: for, sudden, the firm earth was shaken,
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

So, as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep.
When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,
Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,
Until their complicating lines did steep
The orient sun in shadow:—not a sound
Was heard: one horrible repose did keep
The forests and the floods, and all around [ground
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the

Hark! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps
Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn,
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps
Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on,
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,
Lightning and hail, and darkness eddying by.
There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone
Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven
 That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen
 Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven
 Most delicately, and the ocean green,
 Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,
 Quivered like burning emerald : calm was spread
 On all below : but far on high, between
 Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,
 Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed

For ever, as the war became more fierce
 Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,
 That spot grew more serene : blue light did pierce
 The woof of those white clouds, which seemed to lie
 Far, deep, and motionless, while thro' the sky
 The palid semicircle of the moon
 Pass'd on, in slow and moving way ;
 Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon
 But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

I could not choose but gaze, a fascination
 Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew
 My fancy thither, and in expectation
 Of what I knew not I remained :—the hue
 Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,
 Suddenly stained with shadow did appear :
 A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,
 Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere
 Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

Even like a bark, which, from a chasm of mountains
 Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river
 Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,
 Comes forth, whilst, with the speed its frame doth
 quiver,
 Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour ;
 So from that chasm of light a winged Form
 On all the winds of heaven approaching ever
 Floated, dilating as it came: the storm
 Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and
 warm.

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
Suspending thought and breath ; a monstrous sight !
For in the air do I behold indeed
An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight :—
And, now relaxing its impetuous flight
Before the aerial rock on which I stood,
The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,
And every golden feather gleamed therein—
Feather and scale inextricably blended.
The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin
Shone thro' the plumes ; its coils were twined within
By many a swollen and knotted fold, and high
And far, the neck receding lithe and thin,
Sustained a crested head, which warily
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's stedfast eye.

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling,
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed
Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing
Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,
Drooped thro' the air : and still it shrieked and wailed,
And, casting back its eager head, with beak
And talon unremittingly assailed
The wreathed Serpent, who did ever seek
Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

What life, what power, was kindled and arose
Within the sphere of that appalling fray !
For, from the encounter of those wond'rous foes,
A vapour, like the sea's suspended spray,
Hung gathered : in the void air, far away,
Floated the shattered plumes ; bright scales did leap
Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
Like sparks into the darkness ;— as they sweep.
Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,
And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;
Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
Locked in stiff rings his adamant coil,
Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,
Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea
Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil
His adversary, who then reared on high
His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

Then, on the white edge of the bursting surge,
Where they had sunk together, would the Snake
Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge
The wind with his wild writhings; for, to break
That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake
The strength of his unconquerable wings
As in despair, and with his sinewy neck
Dissolve in sudden shock those linked rings,
Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,
Thus long, but unprevailing:—the event
Of that portentous fight appeared at length:
Until the lamp of day was almost spent,
It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,
Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last
Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent
With clang of wings and scream the Eagle past,
Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean
And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—
Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion
Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere
Of sun-set sweep, and their fierce roar to hear
Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound
To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear
And beautiful, and there the sea I found
Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,
Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand
Of the waste sea—fair as one flower adorning
An icy wilderness—each delicate hand
Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band
Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sat
Looking upon the waves ; on the bare strand
Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,
Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon
That unimaginable fight, and now
That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,
As brightly it illustrated her woe ;
For in the tears which silently to flow
Paused not, its lustre hung : she, watching aye
The foam-wreathes which the faint tide wove below
Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,
And after every groan looked up over the sea.

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make
His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,
Parted, and quivered ; the tears ceased to break
From her immoveable eyes ; no voice of wail
Escaped her ; but she rose, and, on the gale
Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair,
Poured forth her voice : the caverns of the vale,
That opened to the ocean, caught it there,
And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

She spake in language whose strange melody
Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,
What made its music more melodious be,
The pity and the love of every tone ;
But to the Snake those accents sweet were known,
His native tongue and her's ; nor did he beat
The hoar spray idly then, but, winding on
Thro' the green shadows of the waves that meet
Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,
And wept and clasped her hands, and all between
Renewed the unintelligible strain
Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien ;
And she unveiled her bosom, and the green
And glancing shadows of the sea did play
O'er its marmoreal depth :—one moment seen,
For ere the next the Serpent did obey
Her voice, and, coiled in rest, in her embrace it lay

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes
Serene, yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,
While yet the day-light lingereth in the skies
Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air,
And said : To grieve is wise, but the despair
Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep :
This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare
With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,
A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,
Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.
I wept. Shall this fair woman, all alone,
Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go ?
His head is on her heart, and who can know
How soon he may devour his feeble prey ?—
Such were my thoughts, when the tide 'gan to flow ;
And that strange boat, like the moon's shade, did sway
Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay.

A boat of rare device, which had no sail
But its own curved prow of thin moonstone,
Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,
To catch those gentlest winds which are not known
To breathe, but by the steady speed alone
With which it cleaves the sparkling sea ; and now
We are embarked, the mountains hang and frown
Over the starry deep that gleams below
A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

And, as we sailed, a strange and awful tale
 That Woman told, like such mysterious dream
 As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale !
 'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,
 Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme
 Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent
 Her looks on mine: those eyes a kindling beam
 Of love divin^o into my spirit sent,
 And, ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

Speak not to me, but hear ! Much shalt thou learn,
 Much must remain untaught, and more untold,
 In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn :
 Know then, that, from the depth of ages old,
 Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold,
 Ruling the world with a divided lot,
 Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,
 Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought
 Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential
 Nought.

The earliest dweller of the world alone
 Stood on the verge of chaos : Lo ! afar
 O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,
 Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar :
 A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star
 Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,
 All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,
 In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood [blood
 That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's

Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil,
 One Power of many shapes which none may know,
 One Shape of many names ; the Fiend did revel
 In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,
 For the new race of man went to and fro,
 Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,
 And hating good—for his immortal foe
 He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,
 To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things
Was Evil's breath and life: this made him strong
To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;
And the great Spirit of Good did creep among
The nations of mankind, and every tongue
Cursed and blasphemed him as he pass'd; for none
Knew good from evil, tho' their names were hung
In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan, lown.
As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did

The fiend, whose name was Legion; Death, Decay,
Earthquake, and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale
Winged and wan diseases, and array
Numerous as leaves that strew th' autumnal gale;
Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil
Of food and mirth, hiding his mortal head;
And, without whom all these might nought avail,
Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread
Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

His spirit is their power, and they his slaves
In air, and light, and thought, and language, dwell;
And keep their state from palaces to graves,
In all resorts of men—invisible,
But, when in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell
To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,
Black-winged demon forms—whom from the hell
His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies,
He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries

In the world's youth his empire was as firm
As its foundations—soon the Spirit of Good,
Tho' in the likeness of a loathsome worm,
Sprang from the billows of the formless flood,
Which shrank and fled; and with that fiend of blood
Renewed the doubtful war—thrones then first shook,
And earth's immense and trampled multitude
In hope on their own power began to look,
And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook.

Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,
In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came,
Even where they slept amid the night of ages,
Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame
Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name!
And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave
New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame
Upon the combat shone—a light to save,
Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave

Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive
With its oppressors in a strife of blood,
Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive ;
And in each bosom of the multitude
Justice and truth, with custom's hydra brood,
Wage silent war ;—when priests and kings dissemble
In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,
When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,
The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations
tremble.

Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home
Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears ;
Tho' thou may'st hear that earth is now become
The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers
The vile reward of their dishonoured years,
He will dividing give—the victor Fiend,
Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears
His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend
An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

List, stranger, list ! Mine is a human form,
Like that thou wearest—touch me—shrink not now !
My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm
With human blood.—'Twas many years ago
Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know
The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep
My heart was pierced with sympathy for woe
Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep,
In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep.

Woe could not be mine own—since far from men
 I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,
 By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain glen ;
 And near the waves, and thro' the forests wild.
 I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled,
 For I was calm while tempest shook the sky :
 But, when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,
 I wept sweet tears, yet too tumultuously
 For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in extacy.

These were forebodings of my fate.—Before
 A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,
 It had been nurtured in divinest lore :
 A dying poet gave me books, and blest
 With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest
 In which I watched him as he died away—
 A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest
 Of our lone mountains—and this lore did sway
 My spirit like a storm, contending there away.

Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold
 I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,
 For they weep not ; and Wisdom had unrolled
 The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe :
 To few can she that warning vision show,
 For I loved all things with intense devotion ;
 So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,
 Like earthquake, did uplift the stagnant ocean [tion.
 Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emo-

When first the living blood thro' all these veins
 Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth,
 And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains
 Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.
 I saw, and started from my cottage hearth ;
 And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness
 Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth—
 And laughed in light and music : soon sweet madness
 Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire,
Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover
Like shadows o'er my brain : and strange desire,
The tempest of a passion, raging over
My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,
Which past ; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far,
Came—then I loved ; but not a human lover !
For, when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star
Shone thro' the woodbine wreaths which round my case-
ment were.

'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.
I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank
Under the billows of the heaving sea :
But from its beams deep love my spirit drank,
And to my brain the boundless world now shrank
Into one thought—one image—yes, for ever !
Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank,
The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver
Thro' my benighted mind—and were extinguished never

The day past thus : at night, methought in dream
A shape of speechless beauty did appear ;
It stood like light on a careering stream
Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere
A winged youth ; his radiant brow did wear
The Morning Star : a wild dissolving bliss
Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,
And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness
Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss,—

And said : A Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden ;
How wilt thou prove thy worth ? Then joy and sleep
Together fled ; my soul was deeply laden,
And to the shore I went to muse and weep ;
But, as I moved, over my heart did creep
A joy less soft, but more profound and strong
Than my sweet dream ; and it forbade to keep
The path of the sea-shore : that Spirit's tongue
Seemed whispering in my heart and bore my steps along

How, to that vast and peopled city led,
Which was a field of holy warfare then,
I walked among the dying and the dead,
And shared in fearless deeds with evil men.
Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—
How I braved death for liberty and truth,
And spurned at peace, and power, and fame ; and when
Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,
How sadly I returned—might move the hearer's ruth .

Warm tears throng fast ! the tale may not be said—
Know then, that, when this grief had been subdued,
I was not left like others, cold and dead ;
The Spirit whom I loved in solitude
Sustained his child : the tempest-shaken wood,
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—
These were his voice, and well I understood
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright [light
With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with Je-

In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,
When the dim nights were moonless, have I known
Joys which no tongue can tell ; my pale lip quivers
When thought revisits them ;—know thou alone.
That, after many wondrous years were flown,
I was awakened by a shriek of woe :
And over me a mystic robe was thrown,
By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow
Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.

Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart ?
Fear it ! she said, with brief and passionate cry.
And spake no more : that silence made me start—
I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,
Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky.
Beneath the rising moon seen far away ;
Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high
Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,
So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain—
Wild music woke me: we had past the ocean
Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—
And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain
Of waters, azure with the noon tide day.
Ætherial mountains shone around—a Fane
Stood in the midst, girt by hy green isles which lay,
On the blue sunny deep, resplendent, far away.

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand
Has never built, nor extacy, nor dream,
Reared in the cities of enchanted land :
'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream
Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam
Of the unrisen moon among the clouds
Is gathering—when with many a golden beam
The thronging constellations rush in crowds,
Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,
When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce
Genius beholds it rise, his native home,
Girt by the deserts of the Universe.
Yet, nor painting's light, or mightier verse,
Or sculpture's marble language, can invest
That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse
That incommunicable sight, and rest
Upon the labouring brain and overburthened breast

Winding among the lawny islands fair,
Whose blossom'd forests starred the shadowy deep,
The wingless boat paused where an Ivory stair
Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,
Encircling that vast Fane's aerial heap :
We disembarked, and thro' a portal wide
We past—whose roof, of moonstone carved, did keep
A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,
Sculptures like life and thought; immoveable, deep eyed

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof
 Was diamond, which had drunk the lightning's sheen
 In darkness, and now poured it through the woof
 Of spell-inwoven clouds, hung there to screen
 Its blinding splendour—thro' such veil was seen
 That work of subtlest power, divine and rare ;
 Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,
 And horned moons, and meteors strange and fair,
 On eight-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere !

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light
 Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away
 The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright
 With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day ;
 And, on the jasper walls around, there lay
 Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,
 Which did the Spirit's history display ;
 A tale of passionate change, divinely taught, [wrought.
 Which, in their winged dance, unconscious Genii

Beneath, there sat on many a sapphire throne
 The Great, who had departed from mankind,
 A mighty Senate :—some, whose white hair shone
 Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind ;
 Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind ;
 And ardent youths, and children bright and fair ;
 And some had lyres, whose strings were intertwined
 With pale and clinging flames, which ever there [air.
 Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,
 Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,
 Distinct with circling steps which rested on
 Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came
 Into that hail, she shrieked the Spirit's name,
 And fell, and vanished slowly from the sight,
 Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,
 Which, gathering, filled that dome of woven light,
 Blotting it's sphered stars with supernatural night.

Then, first, two glittering lights were seen to glide
In circles on the amethystine floor,
Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,
Like meteors on a river's grassy shore,
They round each other rolled, dilating more
And more—then rose, commingling into one,
One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er
A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown
Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne.

The cloud which rested on that cone of flame
Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form
Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame
The raider of whose limbs rose-like and warm
Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform
The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state
Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm
Sinking upon their hearts and mine—He sate
Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw
Over my brow—a hand supported me,
Whose touch was magic strength: an eye of blue
Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;
And a voice said—Thou must a listener be
This day—two mighty Spirits now return,
Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea;
They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn;
A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn.

I looked, and lo! one stood forth eloquently;
His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow
Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,
The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when, in their flow
Thro' the bright air, the soft winds as they blow
Wake the green world—his gestures did obey
The ocular mind that made his features glow,
And, where his curved lips half open lay,
Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair
 He stood thus beautiful: but there was One
 Who sate beside him like his shadow there,
 And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known
 To be thus fair, by the few lines alone
 Which thro' her floating locks and gathered cloke,
 Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:—
 None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke
 Memories which found a tongue, as thus he silence
 broke.

—00—

CANTO II.

THE star-light smile of children, the sweet looks
 Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,
 The murmur of the unreposing brooks,
 And the green light which, shifting overhead,
 Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,
 The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,
 The lamp-light thro' the rafters cheerily spread,
 And on the twining flax—in life's young hours
 These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's folded
 powers

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,
 Such impulses within my mortal frame
 Arose, and they were dear to memory,
 Like tokens of the dead:—but others came
 Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame
 Of the past world, the vital words and deeds
 Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,
 Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds
 Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison
 feeds.

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

91

I heard, as all have heard, the various story
Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.
Feeble historians of its shame and glory,
False disputants on all its hopes and fears,
Victims who worshipped ruin,—chroniclers
Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state,
Yet flattering power had given its ministers
A throne of judgment in the grave;—'twas fate
That among such as these my youth should seek its
mate.

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane
Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,
And stabled in our homes,—until the chain
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide
That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,
And the æthereal shapes which are suspended
Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,
The clouds of Sun and Ocean, who have blended
The colours of the air since first extended
It cradled the young world, none wandered forth
To see or feel: a darkness had descended
On every heart: the light which shows its worth
Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,
Was a dungeon to my blasted kind;
All that despair from murdered hope inherits
They sought, and, in their helpless misery blind,
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,
And stronger tyrants:—a dark gulph before,
The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned; behind,
Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore
On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from
shore.

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe
Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,
And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro
Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought
The worship thence which they each other taught.
Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn
Even to the Ills again from which they sought
Such refuge after death !—well might they learn
To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern !

For they all pined in bondage ; body and soul,
Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent
Before one Power, to which supreme controul
Over their will, by their own weakness lent,
Made all its many names omnipotent ;
All symbols of things evil, all divine ;
The hymns of blood or mockery, which rent
The air from all its fanes, did interwine
Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,
And in no careless heart transcribed the tale ;
But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary
In shame and scorn, from groans and crowds made pale
By famine, from a mother's desolate wail
O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood
Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale
With the heart's warfare, did I gather food
To feed my many thoughts,—a tameless multitude !

I wandered thro' the wrecks of days departed
Far by the desolated shore, when even
O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted
The light of moonrise ; In the northern Heaven,
Among the clouds near the horizon driven,
The mountains lay beneath one planet pale :
Around me, broken tombs and columns riven
Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale
Waked in those ruins grey its everlasting wail !

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,
Nor had I heard the story of their deeds ;
But dwellings of a race of mightier men,
And monuments of less ungentle creeds,
Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds
The language which they speak ; and now, to me
The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,
The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,
Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery.

Such man has been, and such may yet become !
Aye, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they
Who on the fragments of you shattered dome
Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway
Of the vast stream of ages bear away
My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—
Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray
Of the still moon, my spirit onward past
Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

It shall be thus no more ! Too long, too long,
Sons of the glorious dead, have ye lain bound
In darkness and in ruin.—Hope is strong ;
Justice and Truth their winged child have found—
Awake ! arise ! until the mighty sound
Of your career shall scatter in its gust
The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground
Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,
Whose idol has so long betrayed your implous trust.

It must be so—I will arise and waken
The multitude, and, like a sulphurous hill
Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken
The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill
The world with cleansing fire: It must, it will—
It may not be restrained !—and who shall stand
Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still,
But Laon ? on high Freedom's desert land
A tower whose marble walls the leagued storms with-
stand !

One summer night, in commune with the hope
Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins gray
I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope;
And ever from that hour upon me lay
The burden of this hope, and night or day,
In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:
Among mankind, or when gone far away
To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest
Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did
rest.

These hopes found words thro' which my spirit sought
To weave a bondage of such sympathy
As might create some response to the thought
Which ruled me now—and, as the vapours lie
Bright in the out-spread morning's radiancy.
So were these thoughts invested with the light
Of language: and all bosoms made reply
On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might
Thro' darkness wide and deep those tranced spirits smite.

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,
And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother.
When I could feel the listener's senses swim,
And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother,
Even as my words evoked them—and another,
And yet another, I did fondly deem,
Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;
And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,
As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth
Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,
Did Laon and his friend on one grey plinth,
Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,
Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep;
And that his friend was false nay now be said
Calmly—that he like other men could weep
Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread
Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

Then, had no great alm recompensed my sorrow,
 I must have sought dark respite from its stress
 In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—
 For, to tread life's dismay'ing wilderness
 Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,
 Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,
 Is hard—but I betrayed it not, nor less
 With love that scorned return sought to unbind
 The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

With deathless minds, which leave where they have past
 A path of light, my soul communion knew;
 Till from that glorious intercourse at last,
 As from a mine of magic store, I drew
 Words which were weapons;—round my heart there
 grew

The adamant'ine armour of their power,
 And from my fancy wings of golden hue
 Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower,
 A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes
 Were loadstars of delight, which drew me home
 When I might wander forth; nor did I prize
 Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome
 Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,
 And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,
 Since kin were cold, and friends had now become
 Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,
 Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,
 Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age
 In all but its sweet looks and mein divine;
 Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage
 A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,
 When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought,
 Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage
 To overflow with tears, or converse fraught wrought,
 With passion, o'er the depths its fleeting light had

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,
A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
One impulse of her being—in her lightness
Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
Which wanders thro' the waste air's pathless blue,
To nourish some far desert : she did seem
Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,
Like the bright shade of some immortal dream
Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's
dark stream.

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
A second self, far dearer and more fair ;
Which clothed in undissolving radiancy
All those steep paths which langour and despair
Of human things had made so dark and bare ;
But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft
Of friends, and overcome by lonely care,
Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was left.

Once she was dear, now she was all I had
To love in human life—this playmate sweet,
This child of twelve years old—so she was made
My sole associate, and her willing feet
Wandered with mine where earth and ocean met,
Beyond the aerial mountains whose vast cells
The unrepousing billows ever beat,
Thro' forests wide and old, and lawny dells,
Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald walls

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand
When twined in mine : she followed where I went,
Thro' the lone paths of our immortal land.
It had no waste, but some memorial lent
Which strung me to my toil—some monument
Vital with mind : then Cythna by my side,
Until the bright and beaming day were spent,
Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,
Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied.

And soon I could not have refused her—thus
For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er
Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:
And, when the pauses of the lulling air
Of noon beside the sea had made a lair
For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,
And I kept watch over her slumbers there,
While as the shifting visions o'er her swept,
Amid her innocent rest by turns she smil'd and wept.

And, in the murmur of her dreams, was heard
Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly
She would arise, and, like the secret bird,
Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky
With her sweet accents—a wild melody!
Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong
The source of passion, whence they rose to be
Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,
To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung.

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream
Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great
Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme
Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate
Amid the calm which rapture doth create
After its tumult, her heart vibrating,
Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state
From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing
Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring.

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song
Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,
A mighty congregation, which were strong
Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse
The cloud of that unutterable curse
Which clings upon mankind:—all things became
Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,
Earth, sea, and sky, the planets, life, and fame,
And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous
frame.

And this beloved child thus felt the sway
Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud
The very wind on which it rolls away :
Her's too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed
With music and with light, their fountains flowed
In poesy : and her still and earnest face,
Palid with feelings which intensely glowed
Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace,
Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned
to trace.

In me, communion with this purest being
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
In knowledge, which in her's mine own mind seeing,
Left in the human world few mysteries :
How without fear of evil or disguise
Was Cythna !—what a spirit strong and mild,
Which death, or pain, or peril, could despise,
Yet melt in tenderness ! what genius wild,
Yet mighty, was enclosed within one simple child !

New lore was this—old age with its grey hair,
And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,
And icy sneers, is nought ; it cannot dare
To burst the chains which life for ever flings
On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,
So is it cold and cruel, and is made
The careless slave of that dark power which brings
Evil, like blight on man, who, still betrayed,
Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep
The empire of the world : thus Cythna taught
Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,
Unconscious of the power thro' which she wrought
The woof of such intelligible thought,
As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay
In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought
Why the deceiver and the slave has sway
O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day

Within that fairest form, the female mind
Untainted by the poison clouds which rest
On the dark world, a sacred home did find :
But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,
Victorious Evil, which had dispossessed
All native power, had those fair children torn,
And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,
And minister to lust its joys forlorn,
Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

This misery was but coldly felt, 'till she
Became my only friend, who had indued
My purpose with a wider sympathy ;
Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude
In which the half of human kind were mewed.
Victims of lust and hate, the slave of slaves,
She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food
To the hyena lust, who, among graves,
Over his loathed meal, laughing in agony, raves.

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,
Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her:—' Cythna
Well with the world art thou unreconciled ;
Never will peace and human nature meet
Till free and equal man and woman greet
Domestic peace ; and ere this power can make
In human hearts its calm and holy seat ;
This slavery must be broken.'—As I spake,
From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

She replied earnestly :—' It shall be mine,
This task, mine, Laon !—thou hast much to gain ;
Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine ,
If she should lead a happy female train
To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,
When myriads at thy call shall throng aro und
The Golden City,'—Then the child did strain
My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wo und
Her own about my neck, till some reply she found

I smiled, and spake not.—‘Wherefore dost thou smile
At what I say? Laon, I am not weak,
And, though my cheek might become pale the while,
With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek
Through their array of banded slaves to wreak
Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought
It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek
To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot
And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

‘Whence came I what I am? Thou, Laon, knowest
How a young child should thus undaunted be;
Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest
Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,
So to become most good, and great, and free;
Yet far beyond this Ocean’s utmost roar
In towers and huts are many like to me,
Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore
As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more

‘Think’st thou that I shall speak unskillfully,
And none will heed me? I remember now,
How once a slave, in tortures doomed to die,
Was saved, because in accents sweet and low
He sang a song his Judge loved long ago,
As he was led to death.—All shall relent
Who hear me—tears, as mine have flowed, shall flow,
Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent
As renovates the world,—a will omnipotent!

‘Yes, I will tread Pride’s golden palaces,
Thro’ Penury’s roofless huts and squalid cells
Will I descend, where’er in abjectness
Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,
There with the music of thine own sweet spells
Will disincant the captives, and will pour
For the despairing, from the crystal wells
Of thy deep spirit, reason’s mighty lore,
And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

Can man be free if woman be a slave?
Chain one who lives and breathes this boundless air
To the corruption of a closed grave;
Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to hear
Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare -
To trample their oppressors? In their home
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear
The shape of woman—hoary crime would come
Behind, and fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

' I am a child :—I would not yet depart.
When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp
Aloft which thou has kindled in my heart,
Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp
Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp
Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm
Thy Cythna ever—truth its radiant stamp
Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm
Upon her children's brow, dark falsehood to disarm.

' Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—
Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand
Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean grey;
Amid the dwellers of this lonely land
I shall remain alone—and thy command
Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,
And, multitudinous as the desert sand
Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance,
Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

' Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,
Which from remotest glens two warring winds
Involve in fire, which not the loosened fountain
Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds
Of evil catch from our uniting minds
The spark which must consume them.—Cytana then
Will have cast off the impotence that binds
Her childhood now, and thro' the paths of men
Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's
den.

' We part !—O Laon, I must dare, nor tremble
To meet those looks no more !—O heavy stroke !
Sweet brother of my soul : can I dissemble
The agony of this thought ?—As thus she spoke
The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke,
And in my arms she hid her beating breast,
I remained still for tears—sudden she woke
As one awakes from sleep, and wildly prest
My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possest.

' We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,
Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess
Within whose happy silence, thus embraced,
We might survive all ills in one caress :
Nor doth the grave—I fear 'tis passionless—
Nor yon cold vacant Heaven :—we meet again
Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain
When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain.'

I could not speak, tho' she had ceased, for now
The fountains of her feelings, swift and deep,
Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow ;
So we arose, and by the star-light steep
Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,
But pale, were calm.—With passion thus subdued,
Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep,
We moved towards our home : where, in this mood,
Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

CANTO III.

What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber
That night I know not; but my own did seem
As if they might ten thousand years outnumber
Of waking life, the visions of a dream,
Which hid in one dim gulph the troubled stream
Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,
Whose limits yet were never memory's theme—
And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds past,
Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace
More time than might make grey the infant world,
Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:
When the third came, like mist on breezes curled,
From my dim sleep, a shadow was unfurled;
Methought, upon the threshold of a cave
I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled
With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,
Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave

We lived a day as we were wont to live,
But Nature had a robe of glory on,
And the bright air o'er every shape did weave
Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,
The leafless bough among the leaves alone,
Had being clearer than its own could be,
And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown
In this strange vision, so divine to me,
That if I loved before, now love was agony.

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,
And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere
Of the calm moon—when, suddenly was blended
With our repose a nameless sense of fear;
And from the cave behind I seemed to hear
Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete,
And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,
A tumult and a rush of thronging feet
The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!
Thro' the air and over the sea we sped,
And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,
And the wind's bore me:—thro' the darkness spread
Around, the gaping earth then vomited
Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung
Upon my flight: and ever as we fled.
They plucked at Cythna—soon to me then clung
A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams
among.

And I lay struggling in the impotence
Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,
Tho', still deluded, strove the tortured sense
To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound
Which in the light of morn was poured around
Our dwelling—breathless, pale and unaware
I rose, and all the cottage crowded found
With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare,
And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

And ere with rapid lips and gathered brow
I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—
It was a feeble shriek, faint, fair, and low,
Arrested me—my mein grew calm and meek,
And, grasping a small knife, I went to seek
That voice among the crowd—'twas Cythna's cry!
Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak
Its whirlwind rage:—so I past quietly
Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie.

I started to behold her, for delight
And exultation, and a joyance free,
Solemn, serene, and lofty, filled the light
Of the calm smile with which she looked on me:
So that I feared some brainless ecstasy,
Wrought from that bitter woe, had bewildered her—
'Farewell! farewell!' she said, as I drew nigh.
'At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,
Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

'Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope:
These bloody men are but the slaves who bear
Their mistress to their task—it was my scope
The slavery where they drag me now to share,
And among captives willing chains to wear
Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend!
Let our first triumph trample the despair
Which would ensnare us now, for in the end
In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend.'

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,
Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew
With seeming careless glance; not many were
Around her, for their comrades just withdrew
To guard some other victim—so I drew
My knife, and with one impulse suddenly,
All unaware, three of their number slew,
And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry
My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

What followed then I know not—for a stroke
On my raised arm and naked head came down,
Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke,
I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,
And up a rock which overhangs the town
By the steep path were bearing me: below,
The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown
The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow
Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,
Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,
Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude
Of distant seas, from ages long gone by,
Had many a landmark ; o'er its height to fly
Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,
Has power—and when the shades of evening lie
On Earth and Ocean, its carv'd summits cast
The sunken day-light far thro' the aerial waste.

They bore me to a cavern in the hill
Beneath that column, and unbound me there :
And one did strip me stark : and one did fill
A vessel from the putrid pool ; one bare
A lighted torch, and four with friendless care .
Guided my steps and cavern-paths along,
Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair
We wound, until the torches' fiery tongue
Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

They raised me on the platform of the pile,
That column's dizzy height :—the grate of brass,
Thro' which they thrust me, open stood the while.
As to its ponderous and suspended mass,
With chains which eat into the flesh, alas !
With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound :
The grate, as they departed to repass,
With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound
Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom was drowned.

The noon was calm and bright :—around that column
The overhanging sky and circling sea
Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn
The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,
So that I knew not my own misery :
The islands and the mountains in the day
Like clouds reposed afar ; and I could see
The town among the woods below that lay, [bay
And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy .

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed
Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone
Swayed in the air:—so bright that noon did breed
No shadow in the sky beside mine own—
Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.
Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame
Rested like night; all else was clearly shown
In the broad glare, yet sound to me none came,
But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!
A ship was lying on the sunny main:
Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—
Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again
Waked with its presence, in my tranced brain
The strings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:
I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain
Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,
And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold.

I watched until the shades of evening wrapt
Earth like an exhalation—then the bark
Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapt.
It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:
Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark
Its path no more!—I sought to close mine eyes,
But, like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;
I would have risen, but, ere that I could rise,
My parched skin was split with piercing agonies.

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever
Its adamant links, that I might die.
O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,
Forgive me, if, reserved for victory,
The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—
That starry night, with its clear silence, sent
Tameless resolve which laughed at misery
Into my soul—linked remembrance lent
To that such power, to me such a severe content.

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair
And die, I questioned not; nor, though the Sun
Its shafts of agony kindling thro' the air
Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,
Or when the stars their visible courses run,
Or morning, the wide universe was spread
In dreary calmness round me, did I shun
Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead
From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison
shed.

Two days thus past—I neither raved nor died—
Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest
Built in mine entralls. I had spurned aside
The water-vessel, while despair posset
My thoughts, and now no drop remained! The uprest
Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust,
Which, had been left, was to my craving breast
Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust,
And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust

My brain began to fall when the forth morn
Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,
Which, through the caverns dreary and forlorn
Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep
With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—
A gulph, a void, a sense of senselessness—
These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep
Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,
A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless!

The forms which peopled this terrific trance
I well remember—like a quire of devils,
Around me they involved a giddy dance;
Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels
Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels,
Foul ceaseless shadows;—thought could not divide
The actual world from these entangling evils,
Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried
All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

The sense of day and night, of false and true,
Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst
That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,
Was not a phantom of the realms accurst,
Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first
I know not yet, was it a dream or no.
But both, tho' not distincter, were immersed
In hues which, when thro' memory's waste they flow,
Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now

Methought that gate was lifted, and the seven,
Who brought me thither, four stiff corpses bare,
And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven
Hung them on high by the entangled hair:
Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair;
As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,
And eagerly, out in the giddy air,
Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung
Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

A woman's shape, now lank, and cold and blue,
The dwelling of the many-coloured worm
Hung there, the white and hollow cheek I drew
To my dry lips—what radiance did inform
Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?
Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost
Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm
Within my teeth!—a whirlwind keen as frost
Then in its sinking gulphs my sickening spirit tost.

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane
Arose, and bore me in its dark career
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane
On the verge of formless space—it languished there
And, dying, left a silence lone and drear,
More horrible than famine:—in the deep
The shape of an old man did then appear,
Stately and beautiful; that dreadful sleep
His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and
weep.

And, when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw
That column, and those corpses, and the moon,
And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw
My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon
Of senseless death would be accorded soon:—
When from that stony gloom a voice arose,
Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune
The midnight pines; the grate did then uncloset,
And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled:
As they were loosened by that Hermit old,
Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,
To answer those kind looks.—He did infold
His giant arms around me, to uphold
My wretched frame; my scorched limbs he wound
In linen moist and balmy, and as cold
As dew to drooping leaves;—the chain, with sound
Like earthquake, thro' the chasm of that steep stair did
bound,

As, lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard,
Were billows leaping on the harbour bar,
And the shrill sea-wind, whose breathe idly stirred
My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star
Shining beside a sail, and distant far
That mountain and its column, the known mark
Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,
So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,
In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

For now, indeed, over the salt sea billow
I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape
Of him who ruled the helm, altho' the pillow
For my light head was hollowed in his lap,
And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,
Fearing it was a fiend: at last he bent
O'er me his aged face; as if to snap
Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,
And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

A soft and healing potion to my lips
At intervals he raised—now looked on high,
To mark if yet the starry giant dips
His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly,
Though he said little, did he speak to me.
“It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,
Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!”
I joyed as those a human tone to hear
Who in cells deep and lone have languished many
year.

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft
Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams,
Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft
The stars of night grew palid, and the beams
Of morn descended on the ocean streams,
And still that aged man, so grand and mild,
Tended me, even as some sick mother seems
To hang in hope over a dying child,
Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

And then the night-wind, steaming from the shore,
Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,
And the swift boat the little waves which bore,
Were cut by its keen keel, tho' slantingly;
Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see
The myrtle blossoms starring the dim grove,
As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee
On sidelong wing into a silent cove,
Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.

CANTO IV.

THE old man took the oars, and soon the bark
Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone;
It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark
With blooming ivy trails was overgrown;
Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,
And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,
Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown
Within the walls of that grey tower, which stood
A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

When the old man his boat had anchored,
He wound me in his arms with tender care,
And very few but kindly words he said,
And bore me thro' the tower adown a stair,
Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear
For many a year had fallen.—We came at last
To a small chamber, which with mosses rare
Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed
Upon a couch of grass and oak leaves interlaced.

The moon was darting through the lattices
Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—
So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,
The old man opened them; the moonlight lay
Upon a lake whose waters wove their play
Even to the threshold of that lonely home:
Within was seen, in the dim wavering ray,
The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome
Whose lore had made that sage all he had become,

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,—
And I was on the margin of a lake,
A lonely lake, amid the forests vast
And snowy mountains ;—did my spirit wake
From sleep, as many-coloured as the snake
That girds eternity ? In life and truth,
Might not my heart its cravings ever slake ?
Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,
And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth ?

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness
Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow
With supernatural shades of clinging sadness ;
That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,
By my sick couch was busy to and fro,
Like a strong spirit ministrant of good :
When I was healed, he led me forth to show
The wonders of his sylvan solitude,
And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill
From all my madness told ; like mine own heart,
Of Cythna would he question me, until
That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,
From his familiar lips—it was not art,
Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—
When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart
A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke
When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,
My thoughts their due array did re-assume
Thro' the enchantments of that Hermit old ;
Then I bethought me of the glorious doom
Of those who sternly struggle to relume
The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,
And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom
Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought—
That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not

That hoary man had spent his livelong age
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,
When they are gone into the senseless damp
Of graves ;—his spirit thus became a lamp
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed.
'Thro' peopled haunts, the city, and the camp,
Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,
And all the ways of men among mankind he read.

But custom maketh blind and obdurate
The loftiest hearts :—he had beheld the woe
In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate
Which made them abject would preserve them so ;
And in such faith, some steadfast joy to know,
He sought this cell : but, when fame went abroad
That one in Argolis did undergo
Torture for liberty, and that the crowd
High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood,

And that the multitude was gathering wide,
His spirit leaped within his aged frame ;
In lonely peace he could no more abide,
But to the land on which the victor's flame
Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came :
Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue
Was as a sword of truth—young Laon's name
Rallied their secret hopes, tho' tyrants sung
Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

He came to the lone column on the rock,
And with his sweet and mighty eloquence
The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,
And made them melt in tears of penitence.
They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.
" Since this," (the old man said,) seven years are spent,
While slowly truth on thy benighted sense
Has crept ; the hope which wildered it has lent
Meanwhile to me the power of a sublime intent.

" Yes, from the records of my youthful state,
And from the lore of bards and sages old,
From whatso'er my wakened thoughts create
Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,
Have I collected language to unfold
Truth to my countrymen: from shore to shore
Doctrines of human power my words have told;
They have been heard, and men aspire to more
Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

" In secret chambers parents read, and weep,
My writings to their babes, no longer blind;
And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,
And vows of faith each to the other bind;
And marriageable maidens, who have pined
With love till life seemed melting thro' their loom,
A warmer zeal, a nobler hope, now find,
And every bosom thus is rapt and shook, [brook
Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swoln mountain

" The tyrants of the Golden City tremble
At voices which are heard about the streets;
The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble
The lies of their own heart; but when one meets
Another at the shrine, he inly weeps,
Tho' he says nothing, that the truth is known;
Murderers are pale upon the judgment seats,
And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,
And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

" Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds,
Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
Bloody, and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw
All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway
Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw
This hope, compels all spirits to obey, [array
Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide

" For I have been thy passive instrument"—
(As thus the old man spake, his countenance
Gleamed on me like a spirit's)—" thou hast lent
To me, to all, the power to advance
Towards this unforeseen deliverance
From our ancestral chains—aye, thou didst rear
That lamp of hope on high, which time, nor chance,
Nor change, may not extinguish, and my share
Of good was o'er the world its gathered beams to bear

" But I, alas ! am both unknown and old,
And, though the woof of wisdom I know well
To die in hues of language, I am cold
In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell
My manners note that I did long repel ;
But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng
Were like the star whose beams the waves compel
And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue
Were as a lance to quell the mailed crest of wrong.

" Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length
Wouldst rise : perchance the very slaves would spare
Their brethren and themselves : great is the strength
Of words—for lately did a maiden fair,
Who from her childhood has been taught to bear
The tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make
Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear :
And with these quiet words—" for thine own sake
I prithee spare me,"—did with ruth so take

" All hearts, that even the torturer, who had bound
Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,
Loosened her weeping then ; nor could be found
One human hand to harm her—unassailed
Therefore she walks thro' the great City, veiled
In virtue's adamantine eloquence,
'Gainst scorn, and death, and pain, thus trebly mailed,
And, blending in the smiles of that defence
The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

" The wild-eyed women throng around her path :
From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust
Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,
Or the caresses of his sated lust,
They congregate :—in her they put their trust ;
The tyrants send their armed slaves to quell
Her power ;—they, even like a thunder gust
Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell
Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel

" Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach
To woman, outraged and polluted long ;
Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach
For those fair hands now free, while armed wrong
Trembles before her look, tho' it be strong ;
Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,
And matrons with their babes, a atately throng !
Lovers renew the vows which they did plight
In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite,

" And homeless orphans find a home near her,
And those poor victims of the proud, no less
Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir
Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness :—
In squalid huts, and in its palaces,
Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne
Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress
All evil, and her foes relenting turn,
And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

" So in the populous City, a young maiden
Has baffled havoc of the prey which he
Mark as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen
Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,
False arbiter, between the bound and free ;
And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns,
The multitudes collect tumultuously,
And throng in arms ; but tyranny disowns
Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling
thr ones

"If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice
Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice
A wretched fall!—uplift thy charmed voice,
Pour on those evil men the love that lies
Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—
Arise, my friend, farewell!"—As thus he spake,
From the green earth lightly I did arise
As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,
And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake.

I saw my countenance reflected there;—
And then my youth fell on me like a wind
Descending on still waters—my thin hair
Was prematurely grey, my face was lined
With channels, such as suffering leaves behind,
Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek
And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find
Their food and dwelling; tho' mine eyes might speak
A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak;

And, tho' their lustre now was spent and faded,
Yet in my hollowed looks and withered mien
The likeness of a shape for which was braided
The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—
One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,
And left it vacant—'twas her lover's face—
It might resemble her—it once had been
The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace
Which her mind's shadow cast left there a lingering
trace.

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.
Glory, and joy, and peace had come and gone.
Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled
Which steeped its skirts in gold? or, dark and lone,
Doth it not thro' the paths of night unknown,
On outspread wings of its own wind upborne
Pour rain upon the earth? the stars are shewn,
When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn
Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man
I left, with interchange of looks and tears,
And lingering speech, and to the camp began
My way. O'er many a mountain chain which rears
Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears
My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,
And gaily now me seems serene earth wears
The bloomy spring's star-bright investiture,
A vision which ought sad from sadness might allure.

My powers revived within me, and I went
As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,
Thro' many a vale of that broad continent.
At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass
Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was
Not like a child of death, among them ever;
When I arose from rest, a woeful mass
That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,
As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.

Aye, as I went, that maiden, who had reared
The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds
The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,
Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds
With whatsoever it finds, or flowers or weeds!
Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade
Such as self-torturing thought from madness needs?
Why was this hope not torture? yet it made
A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

CANTO V.

OVER the utmost hill at length I sped,
A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low
Over the Asian mountains, and outspread
The plain, the City, and the Camp, below,
Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow,
The City's moon-lit spires and myriad lamps,
Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,
And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps,
Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earth-
quake stamps.

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,
And those who sate tending the beacon's light,
And the few sounds from that vast multitude
Made silence more profound—Oh, what a might
Of human thought was cradled in that night!
How many hearts, impenetrably veiled,
Beat underneath its shade! what secret fight
Evil and good, in woven passions mailed.
Waged thro' that silent throng—a war that never failed

And now the Power of Good held victory,
So, thro' the labyrinth of many a tent,
Among the silent millions who did lie
In innocent sleep, exultingly I went:
The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent
From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed
An armed youth—over his spear he bent
His downward face.—“A friend!” I cried aloud,
And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

I sate beside him while the morning beam
Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him
Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme
Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim:
And all the while, methought, his voice did swim,
As if it drowned in remembrance were
Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:
At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,
He looked on me, and cried in wonder—"Thou art
here!"

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;
But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded.
The truth now came upon me; on the ground
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes
We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread,
As from the earth did suddenly arise,
From every tent, roused by that clamour dread,
Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped
Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far,
Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead
Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war,
The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to
spare.

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child
Who brings them food, when winter false and fair
Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild
They rage among the camp;—they overhear
The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair,
Descends like night—when "Laon!" one did cry:
Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare
The slaves, and, widening thro' the vaulted sky,
Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,
Like insect tribes before the northern gale :
But, swifter still, our hosts encompassed
Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,
Where even their fierce despair might nought avail,
Hemmed them around !—and then revenge and fear
Made the high virtue of the patriots fall :
One pointed on his foe the mortal spear—
I rushed before its point, and cried, " Forbear, forbear ! "

The spear transfix'd my arm that was uplifted
In swift expostulation, and the blood
Gushed round its point : I smiled, and—" Oh ! thou
gifted

With eloquence which shall not be withstood,
Flow thus !"—I cried in joy, " thou vital flood,
Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause
For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—
Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—
'Tis well ! ye feel the truth of love's benignant laws.

" Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.
Ye murdered them I think as they did sleep !
Alas, what have ye done ? The slightest pain
Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep ;
But ye have quenched them—there were smiles to steep
Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe ;
And those whom love did set his watch to keep
Around your tents truth's freedom to bestow,
Ye stabbed as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now

" Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,
And pain still keener pains for ever breed ?
We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill
For hire are men ; and to avenge misdeed
On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed
With her own broken heart ! O Earth, O Heaven !
And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed
And all that lives, or is to be, hath given,
Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven.

"Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past
Be as a grave which gives not up its dead
To evil thoughts."—A film then overcast
My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled
Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.
When I awoke, I lay mid friends and foes,
And earnest countenances on me shed
The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close
My wound with balmy herbs, and soothed me to re-
pose.

And one, whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside
With quivering lips and humid eyes :—and all
Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide
Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall
In a strange land, round one whom they might call
Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay
Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall
Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array
Of those fraternal hands were reconciled that day.

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation
Towards the city, then the multitude,
And I among them, went in joy—a nation
Made free by love ;—a mighty brotherhood
Linked by a jealous interchange of good ;
A glorious pageant, more magnificent
Than kingly slaves, arrayed in gold and blood,
When they return from carnage, and are sent
In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement

Afar, the city walls were thronged on high,
And myriads on each giddy turret clung,
And to each spire, far lessening in the sky,
Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung ;
As we approached a shout of joyance sprang
At once from all the croud, as if the vast
And peopled Earth its boundless skies among
The sudden clamour of delight had cast,
When from before its face some general wreck had
pass'd.

Our armies thro' the City's hundred gates
Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair
Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,
Throng from the mountains when the storms are there ;
And, as we pass'd thro' the calm sunny air,
A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed,
The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,
And fairest hands bound them on many a head,
Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision :
Those bloody bands so lately reconciled,
Were, ever as they went, by the contrition
Of anger turned to love from ill beguiled,
And every one on them more gently smiled,
Because they had done evil :—the sweet awe
Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,
And did with soft attraction ever draw
Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

And they, and all, in one loud symphony
My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,
" The friend and the preserver of the free .
The parent of this joy ! and fair eyes, gifted
With feelings caught from one who had uplifted
The light of a great spirit, round me shone ;
And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted
Like restless clouds before the stedfast sun.—
Where was that Maid ? I asked, but it was known of
none.

Laone was the name her love had chosen,
For she was nameless, and her birth none knew :
Where was Laone now ?—The words were frozen
Within my lips with fear ; but to subdue
Such dreadful hope to my great task was due,
And, when at length one brought reply that she
To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew
To judge what need for that great throng might be,
For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea.

Yet need was none for rest or food to care,
Even tho' that multitude was passing great,
Since each one for the other did prepare
All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate
Of the Imperial House, now desolate,
I pass'd, and there was found aghast, alone,
The fallen Tyrant!—Silently he sat
Upon the footstool of his golden throne,
Which, starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone

Alone, but for one child, who led before him
A graceful dance : the only living thing
Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him
Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring
In his abandonment!—She knew the King
Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove
Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring
'Mid her sad task of unregarded love,
That to no smiles it might his speeches sadness move.

She fled to him, and wildly clasped his feet
When human steps were heard :—he moved nor spoke,
Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet
The gaze of strangers.—Our loud entrance woke
The echoes of the hall, which circling broke
The calm of its recesses,—like a tomb
Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke
Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom
Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

The little child stood up when we came nigh ;
Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,
But on her forehead and within her eye
Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon
Sick with excess of sweetness :—on the throne
She leaned. The King with gathered brow, and lips
Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown
With hue like that when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided
Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast
From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded,
A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, cast
One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast
O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,
A shade of vanished days,—as the tears past
Which wrapt it, even as with a father's kiss
I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.

The sceptered wretch then from that solitude
I drew, and of his change compassionate,
With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood
But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,
With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate
Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare;
Pity, not scorn, I felt, tho' desolate
The desolator now, and unaware
The curses which he mocked had caught him by the
hair."

I led him forth from that which now might seem
A gorgeous grave: thro' portals sculptured deep
With imagery beautiful as dream
We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep
Over its unregarded gold to keep
Their silent watch.—The child trod faintly,
And, as she went, the tears which she did weep,
Glanced on the star light: wildered seemed she,
And when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

At last the tyrant cried, " She hungers, slave!
Stab her, or give her bread!"—It was a tone
Such as sick fancies in a new made grave
Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known,
He with this child had thus been left alone,
And neither had gone forth for food,—but he
In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,
And she, a nursling of captivity.
Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change
might be.

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn
Thus suddenly ; that sceptres ruled no more—
That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone
Which once made all things subject to its power—
Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour
The past had come again ; and the swift fall
Of one so great and terrible of yore
To desolateness, in the hearts of all
Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours
Once in a thousand years, now gathered round
The fallen tyrant,—like the rush of showers
Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground,
Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound
From the wide multitude : that lonely man
Then knew the burthen of his change, and found.
Concealing in the dust his visage wan,
Refuge from the keen looks which thro' his bosom ran.

And he was faint withal. I sate beside him
Upon the earth, and took that child so fair
From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him
Or her :—when food was brought to them, her share
To his averted lips the child did bear ;
But, when she saw he had enough, she ate
And wept the while ;—the lonely man's despair
Hunger then overcame, and, of his state
Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

Slowly the silence of the multitudes
Past, as when far is heard in some lone dell
The gathering of a wind among the woods—
And he is fallen ! they cry ; he who did dwell
Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell,
Among our homes, is fallen ! the murderer
Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well
Of blood and tears with ruin ! He is here !
Sunk in a gulph of scorn from which none may him rear !

Then was heard—He who judged let him be brought
To judgment ! Blood for blood cries from the soil
On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought !
Shall Othman only unavenged despoil ?
Shall they, who by the stress of grinding toil
Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,
Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil
Or creep within his veins at will ?—Arise !
And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.

“ What do ye seek ? what fear ye ? ” then I cried
Suddenly starting forth, “ that ye should shed
The blood of Othman—if your hearts are tried
In the true love of freedom, cease to dread
This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven shed
In purest light above us all, thro’ earth,
Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles spread
For all, let him go free, until the worth
Of human nature win from these a second birth.

“ What call ye *justice* ? Is there one who ne’er
In secret thought has wished another’s ill ?—
Are ye all pure ? Let those stand forth who hear,
And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill,
If such they be ? their mild eyes can they fill
With the false anger of the hypocrite ?
Alas, such were not pure—the chastened will
Of virtue sees that justice is the light
Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despoils.”

The murmur of the people, slowly dying,
Paused as I spake ; then those who near me were,
Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying
Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair
Clasped on her lap in silence ;—thro’ the air
Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet
In pity’s madness, and, to the despair
Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet
His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

Then to a home, for his repose assigned
Accompanied by the still throng he went
In silence, where, to soothe his rankling mind,
Some likeness of his ancient state was lent ;
And, if his heart could have been innocent
As those who pardoned him, he might have ended
His days in peace ; but his straight lips were bent,
Men said, into a smile which guile portended, [blended,
A sight with which that child-like hope with fear was

'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day
Whereon the many nations at whose call
The chains of earth like mist melted away,
Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,
A rite to attest the equality of all
Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake
All went. The sleepless silence did recal
Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make [slake.
The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to

The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains
I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail,
As to the plain between the misty mountains
And the great City, with a countenance pale
I went :—it was a sight which might avail
To make men weep exulting tears, for whom
Now first from human power the reverend veil
Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb
Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom :

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,
The signs of that innumerable host,
To hear one sound of many made, the warning
Of Earth to Heaven from its free children lost,
While the eternal hills, and the sea tost
In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky
The city's myriad spires of gold, almost
With human joy made mute society,
Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be :

To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,
The Altar of the Federation rear
Its pile in the midst; a work which the devotion
Of millions in one night created there,
Sudden as when the moonrise makes appear
Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid
Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear
The light of genius; its still shadow hid
Far ships: to know its height the morning mists
forbid!

To hear the restless multitudes for ever
Around the base of that great Altar flow,
As on some mountain islet burst and shiver
Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow
As the wind bore that tumult to and fro.
To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim
Like beams thro' floating clouds on waves below,
Falling in pauses from that Altar dim
As silver-sounding tongues breathed an ærial hymn.

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn
Lethæan joy! so that all those assembled
Cast off their memories of the past outworn:
Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,
And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled.
So with a beating heart I went, as one,
Who having much, covets yet more, resembled;
A lost and dear possession, which not won,
He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

To the great Pyramid I came: its stair
With female quires was thronged: the loveliest
Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare.
As I approached, the morning's golden mist,
Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kiss'd
With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone
Like Athos seen from Samothracia, drest
In earliest light by vintagers, and one
Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne

A form most like the imagined habitant
 Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,
 By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to enchant
 The faiths of men : all mortals' eyes were drawn,
 As famished mariners thro' strange seas gone
 Gaze on a burning watch-tower by the light
 Of those divinest lineaments—alone [sigh
 With thoughts which none could share, from that fair
 I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance
 bright.

And, neither did I hear the acclamations,
 Which, from brief silence bursting, filled the air
 With her strange name and mine, from all the nations
 Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there
 From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair
 Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind
 And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,
 Leaning upon my friend, till, like a wind,
 To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind

Like music of some minstrel heavenly gifted,
 To one whom fiends in thrall, this voice to me;
 Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted
 I was so calm and joyous,—I could see
 The platform when we stood, the statues three
 Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine,
 The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea,
 As, when eclipse hath past, things sudden shine
 To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:
 But soon her voice that calmness which it shea
 Gathered, and—"thou art whom I sought to see,
 And thou art our first votary here," she said,
 "I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!—
 And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,
 Thou dost resemble him alone,—I spread
 This veil between us two, that thou beneath
 Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

" For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?
 Yes, but those joys which silence well requite
 Forbid reply :—why men have chosen me
 To be the Priestess of this hollest rite
 I scarcely know, but that the floods of light
 Which flow over the world have borne me hither
 To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite
 Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither
 From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beats
 together.

" If our own will as others' law we bind,
 If the foul worship trampled here we fear;
 If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!"—
 She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there
 Three shapes around her Ivory throne appear;
 One was a Giant, like a child asleep
 On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were
 In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep
 Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk
 Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast
 A human babe and a young basilisk;
 Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when lovellest
 In Autumn eyes.—The third Image was drest
 In white wings, swift as clouds in winter skies.
 Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, repress
 Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,
 While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond
 eyes.

Beside that Image then I sate, while she
 Stood, 'mid the throngs which ever ebb'd and flow'd
 Like light amid the shadows of the sea
 Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd
 That touch, which none who feels forgets, bestowed;
 And, whilst the sun returned the steadfast gaze
 Of the great Image as o'er Heaven it glode,
 That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze
 Burn'd o'er the isles; all stood in joy and deep amaze,

When in the silence of all spirits there
Laone's voice was felt, and thro' the air
Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair.

1. "Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong
As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,
That float among the blinding beams of morning;
And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,
Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—
Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning
Of thy voice sublime and holy:
Its free spirits, here assembled,
See thee, feel thee, know thee, now:—
To thy voice their hearts have trembled
Like ten thousand clouds which flow
With one wide wind as it flies!—
Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise
To hail thee, and the elements they chain
And their own will to swell the glory of thy train.

2. "O Spirit, vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
Mother and soul of all to which is given
The light of life, the loveliness of being,
Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,
Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert,
In dreams of Poets old, grown pale by seeing
The shade of thee:—now, millions start
To feel thy lightnings thro' them burning:
Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,
Or Sympathy, the sad tears turning
To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,
Descends amidst us:—Scorn and Hate,
Revenge and Selfishness, are desolate—
A hundred nations swear that there shall be
Pity, and Peace, and Love, among the good and free!

3. "Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
The angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,

And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee—
The powerful and the wise had sought
Thy coming; thou in light descending
O'er the wide land which is thine own,
Like the spring whose breath is blending
All blasts of fragrance into one,
Comest upon the paths of men!—
Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,
And all her children here in glory meet
To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

4. " My brethren, we are free! the plains and
mountains

The grey sea shore, the forests and the fountains,
Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow,
For oft we still must weep, since we are human.
A stormy night's serenest morrow,
Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,
Whose clouds are smiles of those that die
Like infants without hopes or fears,
And whose beams are joys that lie
In blended hearts, now holds dominion;
The dawn of mind, which, upwards on a pinion
Borne, swift as sun-rise far illumines space,
And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace.

5. " My brethren, we are free! the fruits are glowing
Beneath the stars, and the night winds are flowing
O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—
Never again may blood of bird or beast
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,
To the pure skies in accusation steaming;
Avenging poisons shall have ceased
To feed disease and fear and madness:
The dwellers of the earth and air
Shall throng around our steps in gladness,
Seeking their food or refuge there.
Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,

And science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

6. " Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!
Bear witness, Night, and ye, mute Constellations,
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!
Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no
more

Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,
Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,
The green lands cradled in the roar

Of western waves, and wildernesses
Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans
When morning dyes her golden tresses,
Shall soon partake our high emotions:

Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear,
The Fiend God, when our charmed name he hear,
Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,
While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire
reigns!"

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night intwining
Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;
She, like a spirit thro' the darkness shining,
In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong,
As if to lingering winds they did belong,
Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech
With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,
Which whoso heard was mute, for it could teach
To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach.

Her voice was as a mountain stream which sweeps
The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,
And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps
In the shadow of the shores: as dead leaves wake
Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make
Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,
The multitude so moveless did partake
Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew
As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder
grew.

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then
In groups around the fires, which from the sea
Even to the gorge of the first mountain glen
Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free
Was spread beneath many a dark cypress tree,
Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red light,
Reclining as they ate, of Liberty,
And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,
Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,
Pours from her fairest bosom when she smiles
In the embrace of Autumn:—to each other
As when some parent fondly reconciles
Her warring children, she her wrath beguiles
With their own sustenance: they relenting weep:
Such was this festival, which from their isles,
And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,
All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or
creep:

Might share in peace and innocence, for goro
Or poison none this festal did pollute,
But piled on high, an overflowing store
Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit
Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes, ere yet
Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute
Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set
In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they
wet.

Laone had descended from the shrine,
And every deepest look and holiest mind
Fed on her form, though now those tones divine
Were silent as she past; she did unwind
Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind
She mixed; some impulse made my heart refrain
From seeking her that night, so I reclined
Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain
A festal watchfire burned beside the dusky main.

And joyous was our feast ; pathetic talk,
And wit, and harmony of choral strains,
While far Orion o'er the waves did walk
That flow among the isles, held us in chains
Of sweet captivity, which none disdains
Who feels : but, when his zone grew dim in mist
Which clothes the ocean's bosom, o'er the plains
The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,
Which that delightful day with its own shadow blest.

—oo—

CANTO VI

BESIDE the dimness of the glimmering sea,
Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,
With that dear friend I lingered, who to me
So late had been restored, beneath the gleams
Of the silver stars ; and ever in soft dreams
Of future love and peace sweet converse lapt
Our willing fancies, 'till the pallid beams
Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapt
The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was
snapt.

And till we came even to the City's wall
And the great gate, then none knew whence or why
Disquiet on the multitudes did fall ;
And first, one pale and breathless passed us by,
And stared and spoke not ;—then with piercing cry
A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks
Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously
Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,
Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger
Resounded : and—" They come ! to arms ! to arms !
The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger
Comes to enslave us in his name ! to arms !"

In vain : for Panic, the pale fiend who charms
Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept
Like waves before the tempest—these alarms
Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt
On the gate's turret, and in rage, and grief, and scorn, I
wept!

For to the North I saw the town on fire,
And its red light made morning pallied now,
Which burst over wide Asia.—Louder, higher,
The yells of victory and the screams of woe
I heard approach, and saw the throng below
Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls
Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow
Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals
The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls.

And now the horsemen come—and all was done
Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld
Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.
I rushed among the rout to have repelled
That miserable flight—one moment quelled
By voice, and looks, and eloquent despair,
As if reproach from their own hearts withheld
Their steps, they stood ; but soon came pouring there
New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

I strove, as drifted on some cataract
By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive
Who hears its fatal roar :—the files compact
Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive
With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive
Their ranks with bloodier chasm :—into the plain
Disgorged at length the dead and the alive
In one dread mass were parted, and the stain
Of blood from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

For now the despot's blood-hounds with their prey,
Unarmed and unaware were gorging deep
Their gluttony of death : the loose array
Of horsemen o'er the wide fields' murdering sweep,

And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap
A harvest sown with other hopes, the while,
Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep
A killing rain of fire :—when the waves smile
As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano isle.

Thus, sudden, unexpected feast was spread
For the carrion fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—
I moved—lived—as o'er the heaps of dead,
Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light
I trod :—to me there came no thought of flight,
But with loud cries of scorn which those heard
That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might
Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred,
And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

And band of brothers, gathering round me, made,
Although unarmed, a stedfast front, and still
Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade
Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill
With doubt even in success : deliberate will
Inspired our growing troop : not overthrown,
It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,
And ever still our comrades were hewn down,
And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown

Immoveable we stood—in joy I found,
Beside me then, firm as a giant pine
Among the mountain vapours driven around,
The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine
With a mild look of courage answered mine,
And my young friend was near, and ardently
His hand grasped mine a moment—now the line
Of war extended to our rallying cry,
As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven
The horseman hewed our unarmed myriads down
Safely, tho', when by thirst of carnage driven
Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown
By hundreds leaping on them :—flesh and bone

Soon made our ghastly ramparts : then the shaft
Of the artillery from the sea was thrown
More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laugh'd
In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,
So vast that phalanx of unconquered men,
And there the living in the blood did welter
Of the dead and dying, which in that green glen,
Like stifled torrents, made a piashy fen
Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged
While the sun climb'd Heaven's eastern steep—but when
It 'gan to sink, a fiercer combat raged,
For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

Within a cave upon the hill were found
A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument
Of those who war but on their native ground
For natural rights ; a shout of joyance sent
Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,
As those few arms the bravest and the best
Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present
A line which covered and sustained the rest,
A confident phalanx, which the foes on every side invest

That onset turned the foes to flight almost,
But soon they saw their present strength, and knew
That coming night would to our resolute host
Bring victory ; so, dismounting close, they drew
Their glittering files, and then the combat grew
Unequal, but most horrible :—and ever
Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,
Or the red sword, failed like a mountain river
Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands for ever.

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood
To mutual ruin armed by one behind,
Who sits and scoffs !—That friend so mild and good,
Who like its shadow near my youth had stood,

Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair,
With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed
Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care;
And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst
I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell,
O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st
For love. The ground in many a little dell
Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell
Alternate victory and defeat, and there
The combatants with rage most horrible
Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,
And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air.

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging:
Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest's swift Bane
When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—
Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;
And this was thine, O War; of hate and pain
Thou loathed slave. I saw all shapes of death,
And ministered to many, o'er the plain.
While carnage in the sun-beam's warmth did seethe,
Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm,
Around me fought. At the decline of day,
Winding above the mountain's snowy term,
New banners shone; they quivered in the ray
Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array
Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands
I soon survived alone—and now I lay
Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands
I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands

When on my foes a sudden terror came,
And they fled, scattering.—Lo! with reinless speed
A black Tartarjan horse of giant frame
Comes trampling over the dead; the living bleed
Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,

On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,
Sate one waving a sword :—the hosts recede
And fly, as thro' their ranks with awful might
Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and
bright;

And its path made a solitude.—I rose,
And marked its coming : it relaxed its course
As it approached me, and the wind, that flows
Thro' night, bore accents to mine ear whose force
Might create smiles in death.—The Tartar horse
Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,
And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source
Of waters in the desert, as she said,
"Mount with me, Laon, now!"—I rapidly obeyed.

Then "Away! away!" she cried, and stretched her
sword

As 'twere a scourge over the courser's head,
And lightly shook the reins.—We spake no word,
But like the vapour of the tempest fled
Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread,
Like the pine's locks upon the lingering blast;
Over mine eyes its shadowy strings is spread
Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast.
As o'er their glimmering forms the steed's broad shadow
past;

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust.
His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray
And turbulence, as if a whirlwind's gust
Surrounded us;—and still away! away!
Thro' the desert night we sped, while she alway
Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest,
Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray
Of the obscure stars gleamed;—its rugged breast
The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest.

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean :—
From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted
Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion

Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted
To music by the wand of Solitude,
That wizard wild, and the far teats implanted
Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood
Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curved flood.

One moment these were heard and seen—another
Past; and the two, who stood beneath that night,
Each only heard, or saw, or felt, the other,
As from the lofty steed she did alight,
Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light
Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale
With influence strange of mournfullest delight,
My own sweet Cythna looked,) with joy did quail,
And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.

And for a space in my embrace she rested,
Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,
While my faint arms her languid frame invested :
At length she looked on me, and, half unclosing
Her tremulous lips, said, " Friend, thy bands were
losing
The battle, as I stood before the King
In bonds.—I burst them then, and, swiftly choosing
The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring
Upon his horse, and swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

" Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer,
And we are here."—Then, turning to the steed,
She pressed the white moon on his front with pure
And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed
From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed :—
But I to a stone seat that Maiden led,
And, kissing her fair eyes, said, " Thou hast need
Of rest," and I heaped up the coursers' bed
In a green mossy nook, with mountain flowers dispread,

Within that ruin, (where a shattered portal
Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now
By man, to be the home of things immortal,

Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,
And must inherit all he builds below
When he is gone), a hall stood; o'er whose roof
Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow,
Clasping its grey rents with a verdurous woof,
A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

Th' autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made
A natural couch of leaves in that recess,
Which seasons none disturbed, but in the shade
Of flowering parasites did spring love to dress
With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness
Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er
The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;
Whose intertwining fingers ever there,
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream
May pilot us thro' caverns strange and fair
Of far and pathless passion, while the stream
Of life our bark doth on its whirlpools bear,
Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;
Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion
Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean
Of universal life, attuning its commotion.

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrap
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow
Of public hope was from our being snapt,
Tho' linked years had bound it there; for now
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below
All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,
Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,
Came on us, as we sat in silence there.
Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air.

In silence which doth follow talk that causes
The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,
When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses
Of inexpressive speech;—the youthful years

Which we together past, their hopes and fears
The blood itself which ran within our frames,
That likeness of the features which endears
The thoughts suppressed by them, our very names,
And all the winged hours which speechless memory
claims,

Had found a voice:—and ere that voice did pass,
The night grew damp and dim, and thro' a rent
Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass
A wandering Meteor, by some wild wind sent,
Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent
A faint and pallid lustre; while the song
Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering beat,
Strewed strongest sounds the moving leaves among;
A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

The Meteor shewed the leaves on which we sate,
And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties
Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight
My neck near hers, her dark and deepening eyes,
Which as twin phantoms of one star that lies
O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,
Swam in our mute and liquid ecstasies,
Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses. [uncloses.
With their own fragrance pale, which spring but half

The meteor to its far morass returned;
The beating of our veins one interval
Made still; and then I felt the blood that hurned
Within her frame mingle with mine, and fall
Around my heart like fire; and over all
A mist was spread the sickness of a deep
And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall
Two disunited spirits when they leap
In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep.

Was it one moment that confounded thus
All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one
Unutterable power, which shielded us
Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone

Into a wide and wild oblivion
Of tumult and of tenderness ? or now
Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
The seasons and mankind, their changes know,
Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below ?

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps
The failing heart in languishment, or limb
Twined within limb ? or the quick dying gasps
Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim
Thro' tears of a wide mist, boundless and dim,
In one caress ? What is the strong controul
Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,
Where far over the world those vapours roll
Which blend two restless frames in one reposing
soul ?

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,
But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,
Whose divine darkness fled not from that green
And lone recess, where lapt in peace did lie
Our linked frames, till, from the changing sky,
That night and still another day had fled :
And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,
And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread
Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering over head.

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,
Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,
And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn
O'er her pale bosom :—all within was still,
And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill
The depth of her unfathomable look :—
And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill
The waves contending in its caverns strook,
For they foreknew the storm, and the grey ruin shook.

There we unheeded sate, in the communion
Of interchanged vows, which, with a rite
Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union,—
Few were the living hearts which could unite

Like ours, or celebrate a bridal night
 With such close sympathies, for they had sprung
 From linked youth, and from the gentle might
 Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long, [strong.
 Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest,

And such is Nature's law divine, that those
 Who grow together cannot choose but love,
 If faith or custom do not interpose,
 Or common slavery mar what else might move
 All gentlest thoughts ; as in the sacred grove
 Which shades the springs of Æthiopian Nile,
 That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove
 Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile, [smile ;
 But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sun-beams

And clings to them, when darkness may dis sever
 The close caresses of all duller plants
 Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we for ever
 Were linked, for love had nurs'd us in the haunts
 Where knowledge from its secret source enchants
 Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing,
 Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants,
 As the great Nile feeds Egypt ; ever flinging
 Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are
 swinging.

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were
 Of those far murmuring streams ; they rose and fell,
 Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,—
 And so we sate, until our talk befel
 Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,
 And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,
 Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison : well,
 For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone, [one
 But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were

Since she had food :—therefore I did awaken
 The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane,
 Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,
 Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,

Following me obediently ; with pain
Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,
When lips and heart refuse to part again
Till they have told their fill, could scarce express
The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness.

Cythna beheld me part as I bestrode
That willing steed—the tempest and the night,
Which gave my path its safety as I rode
Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite
The darkness and the tumult of their might,
Borne on all winds,—Far thro' the streaming rain
Floating at intervals the garments white
Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again
Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the
plain.

I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he
Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red
Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly:
And when the earth beneath his tameless tread
Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread
His nostrils to the blast, and joyously
Mock the fierce peal with neighings ;—thus we sped
O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry
Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

There was a desolate village in a wood
Whose bloom inwoven leaves now scattering fed
The hungry storm : it was a place of blood,
A heap of hearthless walls ;—the flames were dead
Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled
From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky
Flooded with lightning was ribbed overhead
By the black rafters, and around did lie
Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

Beside the fountain in the market-place
Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare
With horny eyes upon each other's face,
And on the earth and on the vacant air,

And upon me, close to the waters where
I stooped to slake my thirst :—I shrank to taste,
For the salt bitterness of blood was there :
But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste
If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

No living thing was there beside one woman,
Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she
Was withered from a likeness of aught human
Into a fiend, by some strange misery :
Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,
And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed
With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,
And cried, " Now, Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed
The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge
draught !

" My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry
Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—
When I came home, one in the blood did lie
Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other !
Since then I have no longer been a mother,
But I am Pestilence :—hither and thither
I flit about, that I may slay and smother :—
All lips which I have kissed must surely wither,
But Death's—if thou art he, we'll go to work together !

" What seek'st thou here? the moonlight comes in
flashes,—
The dew is rising dankly from the dell—
'Twill moisten her ! and thou shalt see the gashes
In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell
First what thou seek'st."—" I seek for food."—" 'Tis
well,
Thou shalt have food. Famine, my paramour,
Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell
Is Famine, but he drives not from his door
Those whom these lips have kissed alone. No more, no
more "

As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength
Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth
She led, and over many a corpse:—at length
We came to a lone hut, where, on the earth
• Which made its floor, she, in her ghastly mirth
Gathering from all those homes now desolate,
Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth
Among the dead—round which she set in state
A ring of cold stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high
Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: "Eat!
Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!"
And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet
Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,
Mine eyes and my heart ached, and, but that she
Who loved me did with absent looks defeat
Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;
But now I took the food that woman offered me.

And, vainly having with her madness striven,
If I might win her to return with me,
Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven
The lightning now grew pailid—rapidly,
As by the shore of the tempestuous sea
The dark steed bore me, and the mountain grey
Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see
Cythna among the rocks, where she alway
Had sate, with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day.

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,
Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast
My arms around her, lest her steps should fail
As to our home we went, and, thus embraced,
Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste
Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind
Trod peacefully along the mountain waste.
We reached our home ere morning could unbind
Night's latest veil, and on our bridal couch reclin'

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,
And sweetest kisses past, we two did share
Our peaceful meal ;—as an autumnal blossom
Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,
After cold showers, like rainbows woven there,
Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit
Mantled, and in her eyes an atmosphere
Of health and hope ; and sorrow languished near it,
And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

—oo—

CANTO VII.

—

So we sate joyous as the morning ray
Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm,
Now lingering on the winds ; light airs did play
Among the dewy weeds ; the sun was warm,
And we sate linked in the inwoven charm
Of converse and caresses sweet and deep.—
Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm
Time, tho' he wield the darts of death and sleep,
And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,
And how, awakened from that dreamy mood
By Liberty's uprising, the strength of gladness
Came to my spirit in my solitude ;
And all that now I was, while tears pursued
Each other down her fair and listening cheek
Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood
From sunbright dales ; and when I ceased to speak,
Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,
Like broken memories of many a heart
Woven into one ; to which no firm assurance,
So wild were they, could her own faith impart.

She said that not a tear did dare to start
From the swain's brain, and that her thoughts were firm
When from all mortal hope she did depart,
Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term,
And that she reached the port without one fear infirm

One was she among many there, the thralls
Of the cold tyrant's cruel lust: and they
Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;
But she was calm and sad, musing alway
On loftiest enterprise, till on a day
The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute
A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,
Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute
The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute.

Even when he saw her wondrous loveliness,
One moment to great Nature's sacred power
He bent, and was no longer passionless;
But, when he bade her to his secret bower
Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore
Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
And mightier looks availed not, then he bore
Again his load of slavery, and became
A king, a heartless beast, a pageant, and a name.

She told me what a loathsome agony
Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,
Foul as in dreams most fearful imagery
To dally with the mowing dead—that night
All torture, fear, or horror, made seem light
Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day
Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight,
Where like a Spirit in fleshy chains she lay
Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

Her madness was a beam of light, a power
Which dawned thro' the rent soul; and words it gave
Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore
Which might not be withstood, whence none could save

All who approached their sphere, like some calm wave
Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;
And sympathy made each attendant slave
Fearless and free, and they began to breathe
Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath

The King felt pale upon his noonday throne:
At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,
One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown
From human shape into an instrument
Of all things ill—distorted, bowed, and bent,
The other was a wretch from infancy
Made dumb by poison, who nought knew or meant
But to obey: from the fire-isles came he,
A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke
Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,
Until upon their path the morning broke;
They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze,
The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades
Shakes with the sleepless surge;—the Æthiop there
Wound his long arms around her, and with knees
Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her
Among the closing waves out of the boundless air.

“ Swift as an angel stooping from the plain
Of morning light, into some shadowy wood
He plunged thro' the green silence of the main
Thro' many a cavern which the eternal flood
Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood;
And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,
And among mightier shadows which pursued
His heels, he wound, until the dark rocks under
He touched a golden chain—a sound aroslke thunder

“ A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling
Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven
As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:
And in that roof of crags a space was riven
Thro' which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,

Shot thro' the lines of many waves inwoven,
Like sunlight thro' acacia woods at even,
Thro' which, his way the diver having cloven,
Past like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

"And then," she said, "he laid me in a cave
Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,
A fountain round and vast, in which the wave
Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,
Down which, one moment resting, he did flee.
Winning the adverse depth ; that spacious cell
Like an upathric temple wide and high,
Whose æry dome is inaccessible,
Was pierced with one round cleft thro' which the sun-
beams fell.

"Below, the fountain's brink was richly paven
With the deep's wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand
Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven
With mystic legends by no mortal hand,
Left there, when, thronging to the moon's command,
The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate
Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand
Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state
Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create

"The fiend of madness, which had made its prey
Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile.
There was an interval of many a day,
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while,
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,
And who to be the jailer had been taught
Of that strange dungeon ; as a friend whose smile
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought.
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought ;—

"The misery of a madness slow and creeping,
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,
And the white clouds of noon, which oft were sleeping
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there ;

And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore
Thy mangled limbs for food :—Thus all things were
Transformed into the agony which I wore,
Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom's core

" Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing.
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air ;
Another frenzy came—there seemed a being
Within me—a strange load my heart did bear,
As if some living thing had made its lair
Even in the fountains of my life :—a long
And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,
Then grew, like sweet reality among
Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

" Methought I was about to be a mother—
Month after month went by, and still I dreamed
That we should soon be all to one another,
And my child ; and still new pulses seemed
To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed
There was a babe within—and when the rain
Of winter thro' the rifted cavern streamed,
Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,
I saw that lovely shape which near my heart had lain.

" It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,—
It was like thee, dear love ; its eyes were thine,
Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth
It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine
Thine own, beloved :—'twas a dream divine.
Even to remember how it fled, how swift,
How utterly, might make the heart repine,—
Tho' 'twas a dream."—Then Cythna did uplift
Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to
shift :—

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness
Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears ;
Which, having past, as one whom sobs oppress,
She spoke : " Yes, in the wilderness of years
Her memory, aye, like a green home appears.

She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,
For many months. I had no mortal fears:
Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—
It was a human thing which to my bosom clove.

I watched the dawn of her first smiles, and soon
When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,
Or when the beams of the invisible moon,
Or sun, from many a prism within the cave
Their gem-born shadows to the water gave,
Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,
From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,
She would mark one, and laugh, when that command
Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

“Methought her looks began to talk with me;
And no articulate sounds, but something sweet
Her lips would frame,—so sweet it could not be,
That it was meaningless; her touch would meet
Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat
In response while we slept: and on a day
When I was happiest in that strange retreat,
With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—
Both infants weaving wings for time's perpetual way.

“Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown
Weary with joy, and tired with our delight,
We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down
On one fair mother's bosom:—from that night
She fled:—like those illusions clear and bright
Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high
Pause ere it wakens tempest:—and her flight,
Tho' 'twas the death of brainless phantasy,
Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

“It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver
Who brought me thither came again, and bore
My child away. I saw the waters quiver,
When he so swiftly sunk, as once before:
Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,
But I was changed—the very life was gone
Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,

Day after day, and, sitting there alone,
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan

" I was no longer mad, and yet methought
My breasts were swoln and changed:—in every vein
The blood stood still one moment, while that thought
Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain
It ebbd even to its withered springs again:
When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned
From that strange delusion, which would fain
Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned
With more than human love,—then left it unreturned.

" So now my reason was restored to me,
I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast
Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory
Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;
Eut all that cave and all its shapes possess
By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one
Some smile, some look, some gesture, which had blest
Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

' Time past, I know not whether months or years;
For day, nor night, nor change of seasons, made
Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:
And I became at last even as a shade,
A smoke, a cloud on which the winds above preyed,
'Till it be thin as air; until, one even,
A Nautilus upon the fountain played,
Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven
Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven

" And when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,
Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat,
Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing
The Eagle, hovering o'er his prey, did float;
But, when he saw that I with fear did note
His purpose, proffering my own food to him,
The eager plumes subsided on his throat—
He came where that bright child of sea did swim,
And o'er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

" This wakened me ; it gave me human strength,
And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,
But I resumed my ancient powers at length ;
My spirit felt again like one of those
Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes
Of human kind their prey—what was this cave ?
Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows,
Immutable, resistless, strong to save,
Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

" And where was Laon ? might my heart be dead,
While that far dearer heart could move and be ?
Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,
Which I had sworn to rend ? I might be free,
Could I but win that friendly bird to me,
To bring me ropes ; and long in vain I sought
By intercourse of mutual imagery
Of objects, if such aid he could be taught ;
But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he
brought.

" We live in our own world, and mine was made
From glorious phantasies of hope departed :
Aye, we are darkened with their floating shade,
Or cast a lustre on them.—Time imparted
Such power to me, I became fearless-hearted ;
My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,
And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted
Its lustre on all hidden things, behind
Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

" My mind became the book through which I grew
Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,
Which like a mine I rifled through and through,
To me the keeping of its secrets gave—
One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,
Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,
And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear ;
Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural
sphere.

" And on the sand, would I make signs to range
These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought ;
Clear elemental shapes, whose smallest change
A subtler language within language wrought :
The key of truths which once were dimly taught
In old Crotona ; and sweet melodies
Of love, in that lone solitude I caught
From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes
Shone thro' my sleep, and did that utterance ha-
monize.

" Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will
As in a winged chariot o'er the plain
Of crystal youth ; and thou wert there to fill
My heart with joy, and there we sate again
On the grey margin of the glimmering main,
Happy as then but wiser far, for we
Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain
Fear, Faith, and Slavery ; and mankind was free,
Equal, and pure, and wise, in wisdom's prophecy.

" For to my will my fancies were as slaves
To do their sweet and subtle ministries ;
And oft from that bright fountain's shadowy waves
They would make human throngs gather and rise
To combat with my overflowing eyes,
And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew
Familiar with the shock and the surprise
And war of earthly minds from which I drew
The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts
anew.

" And thus my prison was the populous earth,
Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn
Before the east has given its glory birth—
Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn
Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones upturn,
And dwellings of mild people interspersed
With undivided fields of ripening corn,
And love made free,—a hope which we have nurst
Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

" All is not lost! There is some recompense
For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,
Even throned Evil's splendid impotence,
Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound
Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound
Of life and death past fearlessly and well,
Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,
Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,
And what may else be good and irresistible.

" Such are the thoughts which like the fires that flare
In storm encompassed isles, we cherish yet
In this dark ruin—such were mine even there;
As in its sleep some odorous violet,
While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,
Breathes in prophetic dreams of days uprise,
Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met
S ring's messengers descending from the skies,
The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever
rise.

" So years had past, when sudden earthquake rent
The depth of ocean, and the cavern crackt
With sound, as if the world's wide continent
Had fallen in universal ruin wrackt:
And thro' the cleft streamed in one cataract
The stifling waters :—when I woke, the flood,
Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked,
Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode
Before me yawned—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

" Above me was the sky, beneath the sea :
I stood upon a point of shattered stone,
And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously
With splash and shock into the deep—anon
All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.
I felt that I was free! The Ocean-spray
Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone
Around, and in my hair the winds did play,
Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way

" My spirit moved upon the sea like wind
Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,
Tho' it can wake the still cloud, and unbind
The strength of tempest: day was almost over,
When thro' the fading light I could discover
A ship approaching—its white sails were fed
With the north wind—its moving shade did cover
The twilight deep;—the mariners in dread
Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them
spread.

" And when they saw one sitting on a crag.
They sent a boat to me;—the sailors rowed
In awe thro' many a new and fearful jag
Of overhanging rock, thro' which there flowed
The foam of streams that cannot make abode.
They came and questioned me, but, when they heard
My voice, they became silent, and they stood
And moved as men in whom new love had stirred
Deep thoughts: so to the ship we pass'd without a word

—00—

CANTO VIII.

" I SAT beside the steersman then, and, gazing
Upon the west, cried, " Spread the sails! behold.
The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing
Over the mountains yet; the City of Gold
Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;
The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily
Beneath the stars; they tremble with the cold!
Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea;—
Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!"

" The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood
Aloof, and, whispering to the Pilot, said,
' Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued
By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead.
The night before we sailed, came to my bed

In dream like that !' The Pilot then replied,
' It cannot be—she is a human Maid—
Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride,
Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside.

" We past the islets, borne by wind and stream,
And as we sailed the Mariners came near,
And thronged around to listen ; in the gleam
Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear
May not attain, and my calm voice did rear :
' Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light
To millions who the self-same likeness wear.
Even while I speak, beneath this very night,
Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.

"What dream ye ? Your own hands have built a home
Even for yourselves on a beloved shore ;
For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,
How they will greet him when his toils are o'er,
And laughing babes rush from the well-known door :
Is this your care ? ye toil for your own good—
Ye feel and think—has some immortal power
Such purposes ? or in human mood,
Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude ?

" What is that Power ? Ye mock yourselves, and give
A human heart to what ye cannot know :
As if the cause of life could think and live !
'Twere as if man's own works should feel, and shew
The hopes, and fears, and thoughts, from which they flow,
And he be like to them. Lo ! Plague is free
To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,
Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity
Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny.

" What is that Power ? Some moon-struck sophist stood
Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown,
Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
His likeness in the world's vast mirror shewn ;

And 'twere an innocent dream, but that a faith,
Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon,
And that men say, that Power has chosen Death
On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

" Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,
Or known from others who have known such things,
A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between
Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings,
Custom, domestic sway, aye, all that brings
Man's free born soul beneath the oppressor's heel,
Are his strong ministers, and that the stings
Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,
Tho' truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel

" And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;
Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!
And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among,
Will bind the wretch on whom is fixed a stain,
Which, like a plague, a burthen, and a bane,
Clung to him while he lived;—for love and hate,
Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain—
The will of strength is right—this human state
Tyrants, that they may rule with lies, thus desolate.

" Alas, what strength? Opinion is more frail
That you dim cloud now fading on the moon
Even while we gaze, tho' it awhile avail
To hide the orb of truth—and every throne
Of Earth or Heaven, tho' shadow rests thereon,
One shape of many names:—for this ye plough
The barren waves of ocean; hence each one
Is slave or tyrant: all betray and bow,
Command or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe

" Its names are each a sign which maketh holy
All power—aye, the ghost, the dream, the shade,
Of power—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;
The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,
A law to which mankind has been betrayed;

And human love is as the name well known
Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid
In bloody grave, and, into darkness thrown,
Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own.

" O love ! who to the hearts of wandering men
Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves,
Justice, or truth, or joy ! thou only can
From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves
Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves,
To give to all an equal share of good,
To track the steps of freedom thro' graves
She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,
To weep for crime, tho' stained with thy friend's dearest
blood.

" To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,
To own all sympathies, and outrage none.
And, in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,
Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,
To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,
To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe ;
To live, as if to love and live were one.—
This is not faith or law, nor those who bow
To thrones on Heaven or Earth such destiny may know.

" But children near their parents tremble now,
Because they must obey—one rules another,
And as one Power rules both high and low,
So man is made the captive of his brother,
And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother
Above the Highest—and those fountain cells,
Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,
Are darkened—Woman, as the bond-slave, dwells
Of man a slave, and life is poisoned in its wells.

" Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may wear
A lasting chain for his own slavery ;—
In fear and restless care that he may live
He toils for others, who must ever be
The joyless thralls of like captivity ;

He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin ;
He builds the altar, that its idol's fee
May be his very blood ; he is pursuing,
O blind and willing wretch ! his own obscure undoing.

" Woman !—she is his slave ; she has become
A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,
The outcast of a desolated home.
Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn
Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,
As calm decks the false Ocean :—well ye know
What Woman is, for none of Woman born
Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,
Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

" This need not be ; ye might arise, and will
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory ;
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
The world like light ; and evil faith, grown hoary
With crime, be quenched and die.—Yon promontory
Even now eclipses the descending moon :—
Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like vapour—Man alone
Remains, whose will has power when all beside is
gone.

" Let all be free and equal !—From your hearts
I feel an echo : thro' my inmost frame
Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts—
Whence come ye, friends ? Alas, I cannot name
All that I read of sorrow, toll, and shame,
On your worn faces ; as in legends old
Which make immortal the disastrous fame
Of conquerors and impostors false and bold
The discord of your hearts I in your looks behold.

" Whence come ye, friends ? from pouring human blood
Forth on the earth ? or bring ye steel and gold,
That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude ?
Or from the famished poor, pale, weak, and cold,
Bear ye the earnings of their toil ? Unfold !

Speak ! are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue
Stained freshly ? have your hearts in guile grown old ?
Know yourselves thus ? ye shall be pure as dew,
And I will be a friend and sister unto you.

" Disguise it not—we have one human heart—
All mortal thoughts confess a common home,
Blush not for what may to thyself impart
Stains of inevitable crime : the doom
Is this, which has, or may, or must, become
Thine, and all human kind's. Ye are the spoil
Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb.
Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil
Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil

" Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate
And Enmity is sister unto Shame ;
Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—
Ah ! it is dark with many a blazoned name
Of misery—all are mirrors of the same ;
But the dark fiend who, with his iron pen
Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame
Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men
Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his
den.

" Yes, it is Hate, that shapeless fiendly thing
Of many names, all evil, some divine,
Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting ;
Which, when the heart its snaky folds intwine
Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine
To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside
It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine
When Amphibæna some fair bird has tied,
Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

" Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,
Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.
It is the dark idolatry of self,
Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,
Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan.

O vacant exclamation! be at rest,—
The past is death's, the future is thine own;
And love and joy can make the foulest breast
A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her
nest."

"Speak, thou! whence come ye?"—A Youth made reply
"Wearily, wearily o'er the boundless deep
We sail.—Thou readest well the misery
Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep
Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,
Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow;
Even from our childhood have we learned to steep
The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,
And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now.

"Yes—I must speak—my secret would have perished
Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand
Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,
But that no human bosom can withstand
Thee, wondrous Lady, and the wild command
Of thy keen eyes:—yes, we are wretched slaves,
Who from their wonted loves and native land
Are reft, and bear o'er the dividing waves
The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

"We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest
Among the daughters of those mountains lone;
We drag them there, where all things best and rarest
Are stained and trampled:—years have come and gone
Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known
No thought:—but now the eyes of one dear Maid
On mine with light of mutual love have shone—
She is my life,—I am but as the shade
Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade

"For she must perish in the tyrant's hall—
Alas, alas!" He ceased, and by the sail
Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,
And still before the ocean and the gale
The ship fled fast 'till the stars 'gan to fail.

All round me gathered with mute countenance,
The Seamen gazed, the Pilot worn and pale
With toil, the Captain with grey looks, whose glance
Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

“ Recede not ! pause not now ! thou art grown old,
But Hope will make thee young for Hope and Youth
Are children of one mother, even Love—behold !
The eternal stars gaze on us !—is the truth
Within your soul ? care for your own, or ruth
For other’s sufferings ? do ye thirst to bear
A heart which not the serpent custom’s tooth
May violate ?—Be free ! and even here [swear !
Swear to be firm till death ! They cried, ‘ We swear ! we

“ The very darkness shook, as with a blast
Of subterranean thunder at the cry ;
The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast
Into the night, as if the sea, and sky,
And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,
For in that name they swore ! Bolts were undrawn,
And on the deck with unaccustomed eye
The captives gazing stood, and every one
Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance
shone.

“ They were earth’s purest children, young and fair,
With eyes the shrines of unawakened thought,
And brows as bright as spring or morning, ere
Dark time had there its evil legend wrought
In characters of cloud which wither not—
The change was like a dream to them ; but soon
They knew the glory of their altered lot.
In the bright wisdom of youth’s breathless noon,
Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune

“ But one was mute : her cheeks and lips most fair,
Changing their hue, like lilies newly blown
Beneath a bright acacia’s shadowy hair,
Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,
Shewed that her soul was quivering ; and full soon

That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look
On her and me, as for some speechless boon :
I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,
And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.



CANTO IX.

“ That night we anchored in a woody bay,
And sleep no more around us dare to hover
Than, when all doubt and fear has past away,
It shades the couch of some unresting lover,
Whose heart is now at rest ; thus night past over
In mutual joy :—around, a forest grew
Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover
The waning stars pranked in the waters blue,
And trembled in the wind which from the morning blew

“ The joyous mariners, and each free maiden,
Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,
With woodland spoil most innocently laden ;
Soon wreathes of budding foliage seemed to flow
Over the mast and sails ; the stern and prow
Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while
On the slant sun's path o'er the waves we go
Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle {smile.
Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to

“ The many ships, spotting the dark blue deep
With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,
In fear and wonder, and on every steep
Thousands did gaze ; they heard the startling cry,
Like earth's own voice lifted unconquerably
To all her children, the unbounded mirth,
The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty !
They heard !—As o'er the mountains of the earth
From peak to peak leap on the beams of morning's
birth.

" So from that cry, over the boundless hills,
Sudden was caught one universal sound,
Like a volcano's voice, whose thunder fills
Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found
A path thro' human hearts with stream which drowned
As struggling fears and cares, dark custom's brood ;
They knew not whence it came, but felt around
A wide contagion poured—they called aloud
On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

" We reached the port—alas ! from many spirits
The wisdom which has waked that cry was fled,
Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits
From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,
Upon the night's devouring darkness shed :
Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm
Of fire to burn the shrouds, outworn and dead,
Which wrap the world ; a wide enthusiasm,
To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake's
spasm ;

" I walked thro' the great City then, but free
From shame or fear. Those toil-worn Mariners
And happy Maidens did encompass me ;
And, like a subterranean wind that stirs
Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears
From every human soul, a murmur strange
Made as I past : and many wept with tears
Of joy and awe, and winged thoughts did range,
And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of
change.

" For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid
Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—
As one who from some mountain's pyramid
Points to the unrisen sun !—The shades approve
His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.
Thus gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill—
Wisdom the mail of tried affections wove
For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill
Thrice steep'd in molten steel the unconquerable will.

" Some said I was a maniac wild and lost ;
Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave,
The Prophet's virgin bride, a heavenly ghost :—
Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave,
Who had stoien human shape, and o'er the wave,
The forest, and the mountain, came ;—some said
I was the child of God, sent down to save
Women from bonds and death, and on my head
The burthen of their sins would frightfully be laid.

" But soon my human words found sympathy
In human hearts ; the purest and the best,
As friend with friend made common cause with me,
And they were few, but resolute ; the rest,
Ere yet success the enterprize had blest. [slumber
Leagued with me in their hearts :—their meals, their
Their hourly occupations, were possest
By hopes which I had arm'd to overnumber
Those nests of meaner cares, which life's strong wings
encumher.

" But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken
From their cold careless, willing slavery,
Sought me : one truth their dreary prison has shaken,—
They looked around, and lo ! they became free !
Their many tyrants sitting desolately
In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain ;
For wrath's red fire had withered in the eye,
Whose lightning once was death—nor fear, nor gain,
Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

" Those, who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt
Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped them
round,
Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt
In the white furnace ; and a visioned swound,
A pause of hope and awe, the City bound,
Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,
When in its awful shadow it has wound
The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,
Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leapt forth.

" Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,
By winds from distant regions meeting there
In the high name of truth and liberty,
Around the City millions gathered were,
By hopes which sprang from many a hidden air;
Words, which the lore of truth in hues of grace
Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air
Like homeless odours floated, and the name [flame.
Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in

" The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,
The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—
That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,
And whatsoever when force is impotent,
To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,
Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.
Therefore throughout the streets the Priests he sent
To curse the rebels,—To their gods did they
For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public
way.

" And grave and heavy men were bribed to tell
From seats where law is made the slave of wrong.
How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,
Because her sons were free,—and that among
Mankind the many to the few belong
By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.
They said, that age was truth, and that the young
Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,
With which old times and men had quelled the vain and
free.

" And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips
They breathed on the enduring memory
Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse:
There was one teacher, whom necessity
Had armed with strength and wrong against mankind,
His slave and his avenger aye to be;
That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,
And that the will of one was peace, and we
Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery.

" ' For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter.
So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied ;
Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter
Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride
Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide :
And yet obscener slaves with smother brow,
And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue, and wide,
Said, that the rule of men was over now,
And hence the subject world to woman's will must bow

" And gold was scattered thro' the streets, and wine
Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall,
In vain ! The steady towers in Heaven did shine
As they were wont, nor at the priestly call
Left Plague her banquet in the Æthiop's hall,
Nor Famine from the rich man's portal came,
Where at her ease she ever prays on all
Who throng to kneel for food : nor fear, nor shame,
Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope's newly-kindled
flame.

" For gold was as a god, whose faith began
To fade, so that its worshippers were few ;
And Faith itself, which in the heart of man
Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew
Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,
Till the Priests stood alone within the fane ;
The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew,
And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,
The union of the free with discord's brand to stain.

" The rest thou knowest.—Lo ! we two are here—
We have survived a ruin wide and deep—
Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve nor fear,
Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep
I smile, tho' human love should make me weep.
We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,
And I do feel a mighty calmness creep
Over my heart, which can no longer borrow
Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-mor-
row.

" We know not what will come—Yet, Laon, dearest,
Cythna shall be the prophetess of love.
Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,
To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove
Within the homeless future's wintry grove ;
For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem
Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,
And violence and wrong are as a dream
Which rolls from steadfast truth an unreturning stream.

" The blasts of autumn drive the winged seeds
Over the earth—next comes the snows, and rain,
And frosts, and storms, which dreary winter leads
Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train ;
Behold ! Spring sweeps over the world again,
Shedding soft dews from her ætherial wings ;
Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,
And music on the waves and woods she flings,
And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

" O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and
gladness,
Wind-winged emblem ! brightest, best, and fairest !
Whence comest thou, when, with dark winter's
sadness
Thé tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest ?
Sister of joy, thou art the child who bearest
Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet ;
Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou wearest
Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,
Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding sheet

" Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,
Surround the world,—We are their chosen slaves.
Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven
Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves ?
Lo, Winter comes !—the grief of many graves,
The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,
The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves
Stagnate like ice at Faith, the enchanter's word,
And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorred.

" The seeds are sleeping in the soil : meanwhile
The tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey ;
Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile
Because they cannot speak ; and, day by day,
The moon of wasting Science wanes away
Among her stars, and in that darkness vast
The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,
And grey Priests triumph, and like blight or blast
A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

" This is the Winter of the world ;—and here
We die, even as the winds of autumn fade,
Expiring in the frore and foggy air —
Behold ! Spring comes, tho' we must pass who made
The promise of its birth, even as the shade
Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings
The future, a broad sunrise ; thus arrayed
As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,
From its dark gulph of chains, Earth like an eagle
springs.

" O dearest love ! we shall be dead and cold
Before this morn may on the world arise :
Would'st thou the glory of its dawn behold ?
Alas ! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes
On thine own heart—it is a paradise
Which everlasting spring has made its own
And, while drear Winter fills the naked skies,
Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh
blown,
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

" In their own hearts the earnest of the hope
Which made them great, the good will ever find ;
And tho' some envious shade may interlope
Between the effect and it, one comes behind
Who aye the future to the past will bind—
Necessity, whose slightless strength for ever
Evil with evil, good with good, must wind
In bands of union, which no power may sever ;
They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never ;

" The good and mighty of departed ages
Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
Who leave the vesture of their majesty
To adorn and clothe this naked world ;—and we
Are like to them—such perish, but they leave
All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

" So be the turf heaped over our remains
Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,
Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins
The blood is still, be ours ; let sense and thought
Pass from our being, or be numbered not
Among the things that are ; let those who come
Behind, for whom our stedfast will has bought
A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,
Insult with careless tread our undivided tomb.

" Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
Our happiness, and all that we have been,
Immortally must live, and burn, and move,
When we shall be no more ;—the world has seen
A type of peace ; and as some most serene
And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye
After long years, some sweet and moving scene
Of youthful hope returning suddenly,
Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember
thee.

" And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us
As worms devour the dead, and near the throne
And at the altar most accepted thus
Shall sneers and curses be ;—what we have done
None shall dare vouch, tho' it be truly known ;
That record shall remain, when they must pass
Who built their pride on its oblivion ;
And fame, in human hope which sculptures was,
Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass

"The while we two, beloved, must depart,
 And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair,
 Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart
 That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair :
 These eyes, these lips, this blood, seem darkly there
 To fade in hideous ruin : no calm sleep,
 Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,
 Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep
 In joy :—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep :

"These are blind fancies. Reason cannot know
 What sense can neither fell nor thought conceive !
 There is delusion in the world—and woe,
 And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live,
 Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give
 Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,
 Or even these thoughts.—Come near me ! I do weave
 A chain I cannot break—I am possess'd
 With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human
 breast.

"Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—
 O willingly beloved, would these eyes,
 Might they no more drink being from thy form,
 Even as to sleep whence we again arise,
 Close their faint orbs in death. I fear nor prize
 Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—
 Yes, Love when wisdom fails makes Cythna wise.
 Darkness and death, if death be true, must be
 Dearer than life and hope if unenjoyed with thee

"Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters
 Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven,
 The Ocean and the Sun, the clouds their daughters,
 Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,
 All that we are or know, is darkly driven
 Towards one gulph.—Lo ! what a change is come
 Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,
 Tho' it change all but thee !" She ceased—night's gloom
 Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky's sunless
 dome.

Tho' she had ceased, her countenance, uplifted
To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright ;
Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted
The air they breathed with love, her locks undight ;
" Fair star of life and love," I cried, " my soul's delight,
Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies ?
Oh that my spirit were yon Heaven of night,
Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes !"
She turned to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise :

—oo—

CANTO X.

Was there a human spirit in the steed,
That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,
He broke our linked rest ? or do indeed
All living things a common nature own,
And thought erect a universal throne,
Where many shapes one tribute ever bear ?
And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan
To see her sons contend ? and makes she bare
Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share ?

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue
Which was not human—the lone Nightingale
Has answered me with her most soothing song
Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale
With grief, and sighed beneath ; for many a dale
The Anteopes who flocked for food have spoken
With happy sounds, and motions, that avail
Like man's own speech ; and such was now the token
Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was
broken ?

Each night that mighty steed bore me abroad,
And I returned with food to our retreat
And dark intelligence ; the blood, which flowed
Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet.

Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew ;—then meet
The vulture, and the wild-dog, and the snake,
The wolf, and the hyæna grey, and eat
The dead in horrid truce : their throngs did make
Behind the steed a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring
The banded slaves whom every despot sent
At that thron'd traitor's summons ; like the roaring
Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent
In the scorched pastures of the South ; so bent
The armies of the leagued kings around
Their files of steel and flame ;—the continent
Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound ;
Beneath their feet the sea shook with their navies' sound

From every nation of the earth they came,
The multitude of moving heartless things,
Whom slaves call men ; obediently they came,
Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings
To the stall, red with blood ; their many kings
Led them, thus erring, from their native home ;
Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

Fertile in prodigies and lies ;—so their
Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.
The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear
His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will
Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill
Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure ;
But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,
And savage sympathy : those slaves impure,
Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe
His countenance in lies :—even at the hour
When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,
With secret signs from many a mountain tower,
With smoke by day and fire by night, the power

Of kings and priests, those dark conspirators
He called :—they knew his cause their own, and swore
Like wolves and serpents to their mutual wars
Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and
Heaven abhors.

Myriads had come—millions were on their way ;
The Tyrant past, surrounded by the steel
Of hired assassins, thro' the public way,
Choked with his country's dead :—his footsteps reel
On the fresh blood—he smiles. "Aye, now I feel
I am a King in truth !" he said, and took
His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel
Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,
And scorpions, that his soul on its revenge might look

"But first go slay the rebels.—Why return
The victor bands ?" he said : "millions yet live,
Of whom the weakest with one word might turn
The scales of victory yet ;—let none survive
But those within the walls—each fifth shall give
The expiation for his brethren here.—
Go forth, and waste and kill !"—"O king, forgive
My speech," a soldier answered ;—"but we fear
The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near ;

"For we were slaying still without remorse,
And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand
Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,
An Angel bright as day, waving a brand
Which flashed among the stars, pass'd"—"Dost thou
stand
Parleying with me, thou wretch ?" the king replied ;
"Slaves, bind him to the wheel : and of this band
Whoso will drag that woman to his side
That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside

"And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth !"
They rushed into the plain—Loud was the roar
Of their career : the horsemen shook the earth ;
The wheeled artillery's speed the pavement tore ;

The infantry, file after file, did pour
Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew
Among the wasted fields: the sixth saw gore
Stream thro' the city; on the seventh, the dew
Of slaughter became stiff, and there was peace anew.

Peace in the desert fields and villages,
Between the glutt'd beasts and mangled dead!
Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries
Of victims, to their fiery judgment led,
Made pale their voiceless lips who seemed to dread
Even in their dearest kindred lest some tongue
Be faithless to the fear yet unbetrayed;
Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng
Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song!

Day after day the burning Sun rolled on
Over the death-polluted land;—if came
Out of the East like fire, and fiercely shone
A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame
The few lone ears of corn—the sky became
Stagnant with heat, so that each cloud and blast
Languish'd and died; the thirsting air did claim
All moisture, and a rotting vapour past
From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

First Want, then Plague, came on the beasts; their food
Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.
Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood
Had lured, or who, from regions far away,
Had tracked the hosts in festival array
From their dark deserts, gaunt and wasting now,
Stalked like fell shades among their perish'd prey.
In their green eyes a strange disease did glow;
They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

The fish were poisoned in the streams; the birds
In the green woods perished; the insect race
Was withered up; the scattered flocks and herds,
'Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chase,
Died moaning, each upon the other's face

In helpless agony gazing : round the City
All night the lean hyænas their sad case
Like starving infants wailed—a woeful ditty !
And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

Amid the aerial minarets on high,
The Æthiopian vultures fluttering fell
From their long line of brethren in the sky,
Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too wel
These signs the coming mischief did foretell :—
Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread
Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,
A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread
With the quick glance of eyes like withering lightning
shed.

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts
Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare ;
So on those strange and congregated hosts
Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air
Groaned with the burthen of a new despair ;
Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter
Feeds from her thousand breasts, tho' sleeping there
With lidless eyes lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,
A ghastly brood, conceived of Lethe's sullen water.

There was no food : the corn was trampled down,
The flocks and herds had perished ; on the shore
The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown :
The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more
Creaked with the weight of birds, but, as before
Those winged things sprang forth, were void of shade ;
The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,
Were burned,—so that the meanest food was weighed
With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

There was no corn—in the wide market-place
All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold,
They weighed it in small scales—and many a face
Was fixed in eager horror then ; his gold
The miser brought ; the tender maid, grown bold

Thro' hunger, bared her scorned charms in vain ;
The mother brought her eldest born, controuled
By instinct blind as love, but turned again
And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man,
" Oh, for the sheathed steel, so late which gave
Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran
With brothers' blood ! Oh, that the earthquakes grave
Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave !"
Vain cries—throughout the streets, thousands pursued
Each by his fiery torture howl and rave,
Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,
Upon fresh heaps of dead—a ghastly multitude.

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well
Was choked with rotting corpses, and became
A cauldron of green mist made visible
At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,
Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,
Which raged like poison thro' their bursting veins ;
Naked they were from torture, without shame,
Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains,
Childhood, and youth, end age, writhing in savage pains

It was not thirst but madness ! Many saw
Their own lean image every where : it went
A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe
Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent
Those shrieking victims ; some, ere life was spent.
Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed,
Contagion on the sound ; and others rent,
Their matted hair, and cried aloud, " We tread
On fire ! Th' avenging Power his hell on earth has
spread."

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid,
Near the great fountain in the public Square,
Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid
Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer
For life, in the hot silence of the air :

And strange 'twas amid that hideous heap to see
Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,
As if not dead, but slumbering quietly
Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony

Famine had spared the palace of the king :—
He rioted in festival the while,
He and his guards and priests ; but Plague did fling
One shadow upon all. Famine can smile
On him who brings it food, and pass, with guile
Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier grey,
The house-dog of the throne ; but many a mile
Comes Plague, a winged wolf, who loathes alway
The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast,
Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight
To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased
That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might
Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night
In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes ; he fell
Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright
Among the guests, or, raving mad did tell
Strange truths—a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror ;
That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind
Fell, like a shaft loosened by the bowman's error,
On their own hearts : they sought and they could find
No refuge—'twas the blind who led the blind !
So, thro' the desolate streets to the high fane
The many-tongued and endless armies wind
In sad procession : each among the train
To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

“ O God ! ” they cried, “ we know our secret pride
Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name.
Secure in human power we have defied
Thy fearful might ; we bend in fear and shame
Before thy presence ; with the dust we claim

Kindred. Be merciful, O King of Heaven !
 Most justly have we suffered for thy fame
 Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,
 Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven.

" O King of Glory ! thou alone hast power !
 Who can resist thy will ? who can restrain
 Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower
 The shafts of thy revenge,—a blistering rain ?
 Greatest and best, be merciful again !
 Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made
 The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a faue,
 Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid
 Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works
 have weighed ?

" Well didst thou loosen on this impious City
 Thine angels of revenge : recall them now.
 Thy worshippers, abased, here kneel for pity,
 And bind their souls by an immortal vow,
 We swear by thee ! and to our oath do thou
 Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,
 That we will kill with fire and torments slow
 The last of those who mocked thy holy name,
 And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim."

Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips
 Worshipped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,
 Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse
 The light of other minds ;—troubled they pass'd
 From the great Temple.—Fiercely, still, and fast
 The arrows of the plague among them fell,
 And they on one another gazed aghast,
 And thro' the hosts contention wild befell,
 As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,
 Moses, and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,
 A tumult of strange names, which never met
 Before as watchwords of a single woe,

Arose. Each raging votary 'gan to throw
Aloft his armed hands, and each did howl
"Our God alone is God!" and slaughter now
Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl
A voice came forth, which pierced like ice thro' every
soul.

'Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came,
A zealous man, who led the legioned west
With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,
To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest
Even to his friends was he, for in his breast
Did hate and guile lay watchful, intertwined
Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;
He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined
To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind

But more he loathed and hated the clear light
Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear
Lest, kindled once, its beam might pierce the night
Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near
Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear
That faith and tyranny were trampled down;
Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share
The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan, [own.
The priests his children drag for slaves to serve their

He dared not kill the infidels with fire
Or steel in Europe: the slow agonies
Of legal torture mocked his keen desire;
So he made truce with those who did despise
The expiation and the sacrifice,
That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed
Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;
For fear of God did in his bosom breed
A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

"Peace! Peace!" he cried, "When we are dead, the Day
Of Judgment comes, and all shall surely know
Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay

The errors of his faith in endless woe !
But there is sent a mortal vengeance now
On earth, because an impious race had spurned
Him whom we all adore,—a subtle foe
By whom for ye this dread reward was earned
And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

“ Think ye, because we weep, and kneel, and pray,
That God will lull the pestilence ? It rose
Even beneath his throne, where many a day
His mercy soothed it to a dark repose :
It walks upon the earth to judge his foes,
And what are thou and I, that he should deign
To curb his ghastly minister, or close
The gates of death, ere they receive the twain
Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign ?

“ Aye, there is famine in the gulph of hell ;
Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn.
Their lurid eyes are on us ! Those who fell
By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn
Are in their jaws ! They hunger for the spawn
Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent
To make our souls their spoil. See ! see ! they fawn
Like dogs, and they will sleep, with luxury spent,
When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent !

“ Oar God may then lull Pestilence to sleep :—
Pile high the pyre of expiation now !
A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap
Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,
When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow
A stream of clinging fire,—and fix on high
A net of iron, and spread forth below
A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry
Of centipedes and worms,—earth's hellish progeny !

“ Let Laon and Laone on that pyre,
Linked tight with burning brass, perish !—then pray
That, with this sacrifice, the withering fire

Of Heaven may be appeased " He ceased, and they
 A space stood silent, as far, far away
 The echoes of his voice among them died;
 And he knelt down upon the dust, alway
 Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,
 Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

His voice was like a blast that burst the porta!
 Of fabled hell; and, as he spake, each one
 Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,
 And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne
 Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone
 Their King and Judge. Fear killed in every breast
 All natural pity then, a fear unknown
 Before, and, with an inward fire possest [invest
 They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods

'Twas morn.—At noon the public crier went forth,
 Proclaiming thro' the living and the dead,
 " The Monarch saith, that his great Empire's worth
 Is set on Laon and Laone's head:
 He who but one yet living here can lead,
 Or who the life from both their hearts can wring
 Shall be the kingdom's heir,—a glorious meed!
 But he, who both alive can hither bring,
 The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal Ki. g."

Ere nigh the pyre was piled, the net of iron
 Was spread above the fearful couch below;
 It overtopped the towers that did environ
 That spacious square; for Fear is never slow
 To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,
 So she scourged forth the maniac multitude
 To rear this pyramid—tottering and slow,
 Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued
 By gad-flies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and
 wood.

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.
 Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation
 Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb

Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation ;
 And, in the silence of that expectation,
 Was heard on high the reptiles hiss and crawl—
 It was so deep, save when the devastation
 Of the swift pest with fearful interval, [fa!
 Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would

Morn came.—Among those sleepless multitudes
 Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine, still
 Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods
 The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill
 Earth's cold and sullen brooks. In silence still
 The pale survivors stood ; ere noon, the fear
 Of Hell became a panic, which did kill
 Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,
 As "Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine
 hour is near!"

And Priests rushed thro' their ranks, some counterfeiting
 The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed
 With their own lies. They said their god was waiting
 To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—
 And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had heeded
 Of human souls.—Three hundred furnaces
 Soon blazed thro' the wide City, where, with speed,
 Men brought their infidel kindred to appease
 God's wrath, and, while they burned, knelt round on
 quivering knees.

The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,
 The winds of eve dispersed those ashes grey.
 The madness, which these rites had lulled, awoke
 Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say
 The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh
 In balance just the good and evil there?
 He might man's deep and searchless heart display,
 And cast a light on those dim labyrinths where
 Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,
 To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,

And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,
 Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead,
 Looked from their meal, and saw an angel tread
 The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she.
 And, on that night, one without doubt or dread
 Came to the fire, and said, "Stop, I am he!
 Kill me!"—They burned them both with hellish mockery

And, one by one, that night young maidens came,
 Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone
 Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame,
 Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,
 And sung a low sweet song, of which alone
 One word was heard, and that was Liberty:
 And that some kiss'd their marble feet, with moan,
 Like love, and died, and then that they did die
 With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

—00—

CANTO XI.

She saw me not—she heard me not—alone
 Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood; [thrown
 She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was
 Over her look the shadow of a mood
 Which only clothes the heart in solitude,
 A thought of voiceless depth.—She stood alone;
 Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood
 Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown
 Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead
 shone.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
 Before its blue and moveless depth were flying
 Grey mists poured forth from the unresting fountains
 Of darkness in the North;—the day was dying;—
 Sudden the sun shone forth; its beams were lying

Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,
And on the shattered vapours, which, defying
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made ;
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,
Its waves gushed forth like fire, and, as if swayed
By some mute tempest, rolled on her. The shade
Of her bright image floated on the river
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver ;
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth.
Rapture, and love, and admiration, wrought
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
Or speech, or gesture, or what'er has birth
From common joy : which, with the speechless feeling
That led her there, united, and shot forth
From her fair eyes, a light of deep revealing,
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
Was now heard there ;—her dark and intricate eyes,
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,
Which mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,
Burst from her looks and gestures ;—and a light
Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise
From her whole frame,—an atmosphere which quite
Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame ;
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame
Which now the cold winds stole ;—she would have laid
Upon my languid heart her dearest head ;

I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet ;
 Her eyes, mingling with mine, might soon have fed
 My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet
 I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

Never but once to meet on Earth again '
 She heard me as I fled—her eager tone
 Sank on my heart, and almost wove a chain
 Around my will to link it with her own,
 So that my stern resolve was almost gone.
 " I cannot teach thee ! whither dost thou fly ?
 My steps are faint.—Come back, thou dearest one—
 Return, ah me ! return !" —The wind pass'd by
 On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

Woe ! woe ! that moonless midnight.—Want and Pest
 Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,
 As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest,
 Eminent among those victims—even the Fear
 Of Hell : each girt by the hot atmosphere
 Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung
 By his own rage upon his burning bier
 Of circling coals of fire ; but still there clung
 One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest ;
 Not life—it was despair to be !—not sleep,
 For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossess
 All natural dreams : to wake was not to weep,
 But to gaze mad and pallid at the leap
 To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,
 Or like some tyrant's eye which aye doth keep
 Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge
 Their steps :—they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous
 surge.

Each of that multitude alone, and lost
 To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew ;
 As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tost
 Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew
 Whilst now the ship is splitting thro' and thro',

Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,
Started from sick despair, or if there flew
One murmur on the wind, or if some word
Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred

Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death,
Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.
Why watched those myriads with suspended breath
Sleepless a second night? they are not here
The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,
Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead;
And even in death their lips are writhed with fear.—
The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead
Silent Arcturus shines—ha! hear'st thou not the tread

Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,
Of triumph not to be contained? See! hark!
They come, they come! give way! Alas, ye deem
Falsely—'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark
Driven, like a troop of spectres, thro' the dark,
From the choked well, whence a bright dearth-fire
 sprung,
A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark
From its blue train, and, spreading widely, clung
To their wild hair, like mist the topmast pines among.

And many, from the crowd collected there,
Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies;
There was the silence of a long despair,
When the last echo of those terrible cries
Came from a distant street, like agonies
Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne
All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes
In stony expectation fixed; when one
Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him
With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest
Concealed his face, but, when he spake, his tone,
Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,
Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast

Vold of all hate or terror, made them start;
For, as with gentle accents he addressed
His speech to them, on each unwilling heart
Unusual awe did fall—a spirit-quelling dart.

“Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast
Amid the ruin which yourselves have made;
Yes, Desolation heard your trumpet's blast,
And sprang from sleep!—Dark Terror has obeyed
Your bidding—Oh that I, whom ye have made
Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free
From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade
Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be
The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

“Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress.
Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise,
Who, if he dared, might not aspire to less
Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies
Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries
To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought,
An empty and a cruel sacrifice
Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought
Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought,

“Ye seek for happiness—alas the day!
Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,
Nor in the fame nor in the envied sway
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
Severe task mistress! ye your hearts have sold.
Ye seek for peace, and when ye die to dream
No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold
And senseless then. If aught survive, I deem
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

“Fear not the future, weep not for the past.
Oh, could I win your ears to dare be now
Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast
Into the dust those symbols of your woe,
Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go
Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,

That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow .
And that mankind is free, and that the shame
Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame.

"If thus 'tis well—if not, I come to say
That Laon—" While the Stranger spoke, among
The Council sudden tumult and affray
Arose, for many of those warriors young
Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung
Like bees on mountain flowers ; they knew the truth,
And from their thrones in vindication sprung ;
The men of faith and law then without ruth
Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent
youth.

They stabbed them in the back and sneered.—A slave,
Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew
Each to its bloody, dark, and secret grave ;
And one more daring raised his steel anew
To pierce the stranger : "What hast thou to do
With me, poor wretch?"—Calm, solemn, and severe,
That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw
His dagger on the ground, and, pale with fear,
Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

"It doth avail not that I weep for ye—
Ye cannot change, since ye are old and grey,
And ye have chosen your lot.—Your fame must be
A book of blood, whence in a milder day
Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapt in clay :
Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend,
And him to you: revenge will I betray,
So ye concede one easy boon. Attend !
For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

"There is a People mighty in its youth,
A land beyond the Oceans of the West,
Where, tho' with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth
Are worshipped ; from a glorious Mother's breast,
Who, since high Athens fell, amongst the rest
Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,

By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed,
Turns to her chainless child for succour now,
And draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

"This land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
Of sun-rise gleams when Earth is wrapt in gloom.
An epitaph of glory for the tomb
Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,
Great People! As the sands shalt thou become,
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

"Yes, in the desert then is built a home
For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear
The monuments of man beneath the dome
Of a new Heaven: myriads assemble there,
Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,
Drive from their wasted homes. The boon I pray
Is this—that Cythna shall be convoyed there—
Nay, start not at the name—America!
And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

"With me do what ye will. I am your foe!"
The light of such a joy as makes the stare
Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow
Shone in a hundred human eyes.—"Where, where
Is Laon? haste! fly! drag him swiftly here!
We grant thy boon."—"I put no trust in ye.
Swear by the Power ye dread."—"We swear, we swear!"
The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,
And smiled in gentle pride, and said, "Lo! I am he!"

—00—

CANTO XII.

—

THE transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
Spread thro' the multitudinous streets, fast flying
Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness

The starveling waked, and died in joy ; the dying,
 Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
 Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope
 Closed their faint eyes ; from house to house replying
 With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,
 And filled the startled Earth with echoes : morn did open

Its pale eyes then ; and lo ! the long array
 Of guards in golden arms, and priests beside,
 Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray
 The blackness of the faith it seems to hide ;
 And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide
 Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—
 A Shape of light is sitting by his side,
 A child most beautiful. In the midst appears
 Laon,—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

His head and feet are bare ; his hands are bound
 Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak
 Their scoffs on him, tho' myriads throng around.
 There are no sneers upon his lip which speak
 That scorn or hate has made him bold ; his cheek
 Resolve has not turned pale ; his eyes are mild
 And calm, and, like the morn about to break,
 Smile on mankind ; his heart seems reconciled
 To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

Tumult was in the soul of all, beside
 Ill joy, or doubt, or fear ; but those, who saw
 Their tranqull victim pass, felt wonder glide
 Into their brain, and became calm with awe.—
 See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw,
 A thousand torches in the spacious square,
 Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,
 Await the signal round : the morning fair
 Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare.

And see ! beneath a sun-bright canopy,
 Upon a platform level with the pile,
 The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,
 Girt by the chieftains of the host. All smile
 In expectation, but one child : the while

I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier
Of fire, and look around. Each distant isle
Is dark in the bright dawn ; towers far and near
Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

There was such silence through the host, as when
An earthquake, trampling on some populous town,
Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men
Expect the second. All were mute but one,
That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone
Stood up before the King, without avail,
Pleading for Laon's life. Her stifled groan
Was heard—she trembled like an aspin pale
Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun
Among those reptiles, stingless with delay,
Even like a tyrant's wrath?—The signal gun
Roared—hark, again ! In that dread pause he lay
As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—
A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last
Bursts on that awful silence. Far away
Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,
Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear
Has startled the triumphant !—they recede !
For, ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear
The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed,
Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,
Bursts through their ranks : a woman sits thereon,
Fairer it seems than aught that earth can breed,
Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,
A spirit from the caves of day-light wandering gone.

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep
The lingering guilty to their fiery grave :
The tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,—
Her innocence his child from fear did save.
Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave
Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood

And, like the reflux of a mighty wave
Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude
With crushing panic fled in terror's altered mood.

They pause, they blush, they gaze—a gathering shout
Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams
Of a tempestuous sea :—that sudden rout
One checked, who never in his mildest dreams
Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams
Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed
Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems
That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed
Inly for self ; thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed,

And others too thought he was wise to see
In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine ;
In love and beauty, no divinity.—
Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine
Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,
He said, and the persuasion of that sneer
Rallied his trembling comrades—" It is mine
To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear
A woman ? Heaven has sent its other victim here."

" Were it not impious," said the King, to break
Our holy oath ?"—" Impious to keep it, say !"
Shrleked the exulting Priest :—" Slaves, to the stake
Bind her, and on my head the burthen lay
Of her just torments :—at the Judgment Day
Will I stand up before the golden throne
Of Heaven, and cry, to thee did I betray
An Infidel ; but for me she would have known
Another moment's joy !—the glory be thine own."

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,
Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprang
From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade
Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among
Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung
Upon his neck, and kissed his mooned brow.
A piteous sight, that one so fare and young

The clasp of such a fearful death should woo
With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cylina now.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear
From many a tremulous eye, but, like soft dews
Which feed spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,
Frozen by doubt.—Alas, they could not choose
But weep; for, when her faint limbs did refuse
To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled:
And, with her eloquent gestures and the hues
Of her quick lips, even as a weary child
Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,

She won them, tho' unwilling, her to bind
Near me, among the snakes. When then had fled
One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,
She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,
But each upon the other's countenance fed
Looks of insatiate love. The mighty veil
Which doth divide the living and the dead
Was almost rent—the world grew dim and pale,—
All light in Heaven or Earth beside her love did fail.—

Yet,—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam
Of dying flames, the stainless air around
Hung silent and serene. A blood-red gleam
Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground
The globed smoke.—I heard the mighty sound
Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean;
And, thro' its chasms I saw as in a swoond,
The tyrant's child fall without life or motion
Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.

And is this death? The pyre has disappeared,
The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng;
The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard
The music of a breath-suspending song,
Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,
Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep;
With ever changing notes it floats along,
'Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep
A melody like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand
Wakened me then. Lo, Cythna sate reclined
Beside me, on the waved and golden sand
Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined
With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind
Breathed divine odour : high above was spread
The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,
Whose moonlight blooms and bright fruit overhead
A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain
With incense-bearing forests, and vast caves
Of marble radiance to that mighty fountain ;
And, where the flood its own bright margin laves,
Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,
Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed
Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,
Till thro' a chasm of hills they roll, and feed
A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed

As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder
A boat approached, borne by the musical air
Along the waves which sung and sparkled under
Its rapid keel—a winged shape sate there,
A child with silver-shining wings, so fair,
That, as her bark did thro' the waters glide,
The shadow of the lingering waves did wear
Light as from starry beams ; from side to side,
While veering to the wind, her plumes the bark did guide

The boat was one curved shell of hoarow pearl,
Almost translucent with the light divine
Of her within ; the prow and stern did curl,
Horned on high, like the young moon supine,
When, o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,
It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams,
Whose golden waves in many a purple line
Fade fast, till, borne on sun-light's ebbing streams,
Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet.—
Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes,
Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet
Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,
Glanced as she spake: "Aye, this is Paradise
And not a dream, and we are all united!
Lo, that is mine own child, who, in the guise
Of madness, came like day to one benighted
In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well required!"

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms
Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair
Than her own human hues and living charms;
Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,
Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,
Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight.
The glossy darkness of her streaming hair
Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapt from sight
The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

Then the bright child, the plumed Seraph, came,
And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,
And said, "I was disturbed by tremulous shame
When once we met, yet knew that I was thine
From the same hour in which thy lips divine
Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,
Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine
Thine image with her memory dear—again
We meet, exempted now from mortal fear or pain.

"When the consuming flames had wrapt ye round,
The hope which I had cherished went away.
I fell in agony on the senseless ground,
And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray
My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,
The Spectre of the Plague before me flew,
And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,
"They wait for thee, beloved!"—Then I knew
The death mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

" It was the calm of love—for I was dying
I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre
In its own grey and shrunk ash lying ;
The pitchy smoke of the departed fire
Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire
Above the towers like night ; beneath whose shade,
Awed by the ending of their own desire,
The armies stood : a vacancy was made
In expectation's depth, and so they stood dismayed.

" The frightful silence of that altered mood
The tortures of the dying clove alone,
Till one uprose among the multitude,
And said the flood of time is rolling on.
We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone
To glide in peace down death's mysterious stream.
Have ye done well ? They moulder flesh and bone
Who might have made this life's envenomed dream
A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste I deem.

" ' These perish as the good and great of yore
Have perished, and their murderers will repent.
Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before
Yon smoke has faded from the firmament ;
Even for this cause, that ye, who must lament
The death of those that made this world so fair,
Cannot recall them now ; but then is lent
To man the wisdom of a high despair
When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

" ' Aye, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,
From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn ;
All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence
In pain and fire have unbelievers gone ;
And ye must sadly turn away, and moan
In secret, to his home each one returning ;
And to long ages shall this hour be known,
And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,
Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning

" ' For me the world is grown too void and cold,
Since hope pursues immortal destiny
With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold
How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die.
Tell to your children this ! ' Then suddenly
He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell.
My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me
There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell
Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

" Then suddenly I stood a winged Thought
Before the immortal Senate, and the seat
Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought
The strength of its dominion, good and great,
The better Genius of this world's estate.
His realm around one mighty Fane is spread,
Elysian islands bright and fortunate,
Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,
Where I am sent to lead ! " These winged words she
said,

And with the silence of her eloquent smile
Bade us embark in our divine canoe:
Then at the helm we took our seat, the while
Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue
Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,
Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer,
On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew
O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,
Whose shores receded fast, whilst we seemed lingering
there ;

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,
Between a chasm of cedar mountains riven,
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet,
As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,
From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,
The boat flew visibly.—Three nights and days,
Borne like a cloud thro' morn, and noon, and even,
We sailed along the winding watery ways
Of the vast stream,—a long labyrinthine maze

A scene of joy and wonder to behold
That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,
Where the broad sunrise, filled with deepening gold
Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver,
And where melodious falls did burst and shiver
Among rocks clad with flowers; the foam and spray
Sparkled like Stars upon the sunny river,
Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,
One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay.

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran
The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud
Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,
Which flieth forth and cannot make abode.
Sometimes thro' forests, deep like night, we glode,
Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned
With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,
The homes of the departed, dimly crowned
O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations
round.

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,
Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight
To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows
Over the grass. Sometimes beneath the night
Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright
With starry gems, we fled, whilst, from their deep
And dark-green chasms, shades, beautiful and white,
Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,
Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of
sleep.

And, ever as we sailed, our minds were full
Of love and wisdom, which would overflow
In converse wild, and sweet and wonderful;
And in quick smiles whose light would come and go,
Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow
Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—
For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know
That virtue, tho' obscured on Earth, not less
Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling
 Number delightful hours—for thro' the sky
 The sphered lamps of day and night, revealing
 New changes and new glories, rolled on high,
 Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny
 Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:
 On the fourth day, wild as a wind-wrought sea
 The stream became, and fast and faster bare
 The spirit-winged boat, steadily speeding there.

Steady and swift, where the waves rolled like moun-
 tains

Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour
 Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,
 The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar
 Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,
 Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child
 Securely fled that rapid stress before,
 Amid the topmast spray and sumbows wild,
 Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled

The torrent of that wide and raging river,
 Is past, and our aerial speed suspended.
 We look behind; a golden mist did quiver
 When its wild surges with the lake were blended:
 Our bark hung there, as one line suspended
 Between two heavens, that windless waveless lake;
 Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended
 By mists, aye feed: from rocks and clouds they break,
 And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

Motionless, resting on the lake awhile,
 I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear
 Their peaks aloft. I saw each radiant isle,
 And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere
 Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear
 The Temple of the Spirit. On the sound
 Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,
 Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,
 The charmed boat approached, and there its haven
 found.

QUEEN MAB.

TO HARRIET * * * * *.

Whose is the love that, gleaming through the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
Whose is the warm and partial praise,
Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind;
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge of love, [roll,
And know, though time may change and years may
Each flow'ret gathered in my heart
It consecrates to thine.

QUEEN MAB.

—00—

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep .
One, pale as yonder waning moon,
With lips of lurid blue ;
The other, rosy as the morn
When throned on ocean's wave,
It blushes o'er the world ;
Yet both so passing wonderful !

Hath then the gloomy Power
Whose reign is the tainted sepulchres
Seized on her sinless soul ?
Must then that peerless form
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline, which is fair
As breathing marble, perish ?
Must putrefaction's breath
Leave nothing of this heavenly sight
But loathsomeness and ruin ?
Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,
On which the lightest heart might moralize ?
Or is it only a sweet slumber
Stealing o'er sensation,
Which the breath of roseate morning
Chaseth into darkness ?
Will Ianthe wake again,
And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life, and rapture, from her smile ?

T

Yes! she will wake again,
 Although her glowing limbs are motionless,
 And silent those sweet lips
 Once breathing eloquence,
 That might have soothed a tiger's rage
 Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror.
 Her dewy eyes are closed,
 And on their lids, whose texture fine
 Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,
 The baby sleep is pillowed:
 Her golden tresses shade
 The bosom's stainless pride,
 Curling like tendrils of the parasite
 Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
 'Tis like the wondrous strain
 That round a lonely ruin swells,
 Which, wandering on the echoing shore,
 The enthusiast hears at evening:
 'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh:
 'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
 Of that strange lyre whose strings
 The genii of the breezes sweep:
 Those lines of rainbow light
 Are like the moonbeams when they fall
 Through some cathedral window, but the tints
 Are such as may not find
 Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!
 Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air:
 Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
 And stop obedient to the reins of light:
 These the Queen of spells drew in;
 She spread a charm around the spot,
 And, leaning graceful from the ethereal car,
 Long did she gaze, and silently,
 Upon the slumbering maid.

Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams. [brain,
 When silvery clouds float through the wildered

When every sight of lovely, wild, and grand,
 Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
 When fancy at a glance combines
 The wondrous and the beautiful,
 So bright, so fair, so wild, a shape
 Hath ever yet beheld,
 As that which reined the coursers of the air,
 And poured the magic of her gaze
 Upon the maiden's sleep.

The broad and yellow moon
 Shone dimly through her form—
 That form of faultless symmetry ;
 The pearly and pellucid car
 Moved not the moonlight's line :
 'Twas not an earthly pageant.
 Those who had looked upon the sight,
 Passing all human glory,
 Saw not the yellow moon,
 Saw not the mortal scene,
 Heard not the night-wind's rush,
 Heard not an earthly sound,
 Saw but the fairy pageant,
 Heard but the heavenly strains
 That filled the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy's frame was slight ; yon fibrous cloud,
 That catches but the palest tinge of even,
 And which the straining eye can hardly seize
 When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
 Were scarce so thin, so slight ; but the fair star,
 That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
 Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,
 As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,
 Spread a perpetual halo round the scene,
 Yet with an undulating motion
 Swayed to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car
 The Fairy Queen descended,
 And thrice she waved her wand,

Circled with wreaths of amaranth :
 Her thin and misty form
 Moved with the moving air,
 And the clear silver tones,
 As thus she spoke, were such
 As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

Fairy. Stars ! your balmiest influence shed .
 Elements ! your wrath suspend !
 Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds
 That circle thy domain !
 Let not a breath be seen to stir
 Around yon grass-grown ruin's height ;
 Let even the restless gossamer
 Sleep on the moveless air !
 Soul of Ianthe ! thou,
 Judged alone worthy of the envied boon
 That waits the good and the sincere ; that waits
 Those who have struggled, and with resolute will
 Vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the
 chains,
 The icy chains of custom, and have shone
 The day-stars of their age ;—Soul of Ianthe !
 Awake ! arise !

Sudden arose
 Ianthe's Soul ! It stood
 All beautiful in naked purity,
 The perfect semblance of its bodily frame,
 Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace .
 Each stain of earthliness
 Had passed away : it re-assumed
 Its native dignity, and stood
 Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay
 Wrapt in the depth of slumber :
 Its features were fixed and meaningless,
 Yet animal life was there,
 And every organ yet performed
 Its natural functions : 'twas a sight

Of wonder to behold the body and soul.
 The self-same lineaments, the same
 Marks of identity, were there:
 Yet, oh, how different! One aspires to heaven,
 Plants for its sempiternal heritage,
 And, ever changing, ever rising still,
 Wantons in endless being.
 The other, for a time the unwillingsport
 Of circumstance and passion, struggles on;
 Fleets through its sad duration rapidly;
 Then, like a useless and worn-out machine
 Rots, perishes, and passes.

Fairy. Spirit! who hast dived so deep;
 Spirit! who hast soared so high;
 Thou the fearless, thou the mild,
 Accept the boon thy worth hath earned,
 Ascend the car with me.

Spirit. Do I dream? is this new feeling
 But a visioned ghost of slumber?
 If indeed I am a soul,
 A free a disembodied soul,
 Speak again to me.

Fairy. I am the Fairy MAB: to me 'tis given
 The wonders of the human world to keep:
 The secrets of the immeasurable past,
 In the unfailing consciences of men,
 Those stern unflattering chroniclers, I find:
 The future, from the causes which arise.
 In each event, I gather: not the sting
 Which retributive memory implants
 In the hard bosom of the selfish men;
 Nor that extatic and exulting throb
 Which virtue's votary feels when he sums up
 The thoughts actions of well-spent day,
 Are unforeseen, unregistered by me:
 And it is yet permitted me, to rend
 The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit,
 Clothed in its changeless purity, may know
 How soonest to accomplish the great end
 For which it hath its being, and may taste

That peace which in the end all life will share
This is the meed of virtue ; happy Soui,
Ascend the car with me !

The chains of earth's immurement
Fell from Ianthe's spirit ;
They shrank and break like bandages of straw
Beneath a wakened giant's strength.
She knew her glorious change,
And felt in apprehension uncontrolled
New raptures opened round :
Each day-dream of her mortal life,
Each frenzied vision of the slumbers
That closed each well spent day,
Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the soul proceeded ;
The silver clouds departed :
And, as the car of magic they ascended,
Again the speechless music swelled,
Again the coursers of the air
Unfurled their azure pennons, and the Queen
Shaking the beamy reins
Bade them pursue their way.
The magic car moved on.
The night was fair, and countless stars
Studded heaven's dark blue vault,—
Just o'er the eastern wave
Peeped the first faint smile of morn.—
The magic car moved on—
From the celestial hoofs
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew,
And, where the burning wheels
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak,
Was traced a line of lightning.
Now it flew far above a rock,
The utmost verge of earth,
The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow
Lowered o'er the silver sea.
Far, far below the chariot's path,
Calm as a slumbering babe,

Tremendous Ocean lay.
The mirror of its stillness shewed
The pale and waning stars,
The chariot's fiery track,
And the grey light of morn
Tinging those fleecy clouds
That canopied the dawn.

Seemed it, that the chariot's way
Lay through the midst of an immense concave
Radiant with million constellations, tinged
With shades of infinite colour,
And semicircled with a belt
Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.
As they approached their goal
The coursers seemed to gather speed :
The sea no longer was distinguished ; earth
Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere :
The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave ;
Its rays of rapid light
Parted around the chariot's swifter course,
And fell like ocean's feathery spray
Dashed from the boiling surge
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
Earth's distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven ;
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever-varying glory.
It was a sight of wonder : some
Were horned like the crescent moon ;
Some shed a mild and silver beam
Like Hesperus o'er the western sea ;
Some dash'd athwart with trains of flame,
Like world's to death and ruin driven ;
Some shone like suns, and, as the chariot passed,
Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature ! here !
 In this interminable wilderness
 Of worlds, at whose immensity
 Even soaring fancy staggers,
 Here is thy fitting temple.
 Yet not the lightest leaf
 That quivers to the passing breeze
 Is less instinct with thee :
 Yet not the meanest worm
 That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
 Less shares thy eternal breath.
 Spirit of Nature ! thou !
 Imperishable as this scene,
 Here is thy fitting temple.

— 00 —

II.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
 To the wild ocean's echoing shore,
 And thou hast lingered there
 Until the sun's broad orb
 Seemed resting on the burnished wave,
 Thou must have marked the lines
 Of purple gold, that motionless
 Hung o'er the sinking sphere:
 Thou must have marked the billowy clouds
 Edged with intolerable radiancy.
 Towering like rocks of jet
 Crowned with a diamond wreath.
 And yet there is a moment,
 When the sun's highest point
 Peeps like a star o'er ocean's western edge,
 When those far clouds of feathery gold,
 Shaded with deepest purple, gleam
 Like islands on a dark blue sea ;
 Then has thy fancy soared above the earth,
 And furled its wearied wing
 Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands
 Gleaming in yon flood of light,
 Nor the feathery curtains
 Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch,
 Nor the burnished ocean waves
 Paving that gorgeous dome,
 So fair, so wonderful, a sight
 As Mab's ethereal palace could afford.
 Yet likest evening's vault, that faëry Hall !
 As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it spread
 Its floors of flashing light,
 Its vast and azure dome,
 Its fertile golden islands
 Floating on a silver sea ;
 Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted
 Through clouds of circumambient darkness,
 And pearly battlements around
 Looked o'er the immense of Heaven

The magic car no longer moved
 The Fairy and the Spirit,
 Entered the Hall of Spells :
 Those golden clouds,
 That rolled in glittering billows
 Beneath the azure canopy
 With the ethereal footsteps, trembled not :
 The light and crimson mists,
 Floating to strains of thrilling melody
 Through that unearthly dwelling,
 Yielded to every movement of the will.
 Upon their passive swell the Spirit leaned,
 And, for the varied bliss that pressed around,
 Used not the glorious privilege
 Of virtue and of wisdom.

Spirit ! the Fairy said,
 And pointed to the gorgeous dome,
 This is a wondrous sight,
 And mocks all human grandeur ;
 But, were it virtue's only meed to dwell
 In a celestial palace, all resigned

To pleasurable impulses, immured
 Within the prison of itself, the will
 Of changeless nature would be unfulfilled,
 Learn to make others happy. Spirit, come !
 This is thine high reward :—the past shall rise,
 Thou shalt behold the present : I will teach
 The secrets of the future.

The Fairy and the Spirit
 Approached the overhanging battlement.—
 Below lay stretched the universe '
 There, far as the remotest line
 That bounds imagination's flight,
 Countless and unending orbs,
 In mazy motion intermingled,
 Yet still fulfilled immutably
 Eternal nature's law.
 Above, below, around,
 The circling systems formed
 A wilderness of harmony ;
 Each with undeviating aim,
 In eloquence silence, through the depths of space
 Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light
 That twinkled in the misty distance :
 None but a spirit's eye
 Might ken that rolling orb ;
 None but a spirit's eye,
 And in no other place
 But that celestial dwelling, might behold
 Each action of this earth's inhabitants.
 But matter, space, and time,
 In those aerial mansions cease to act :
 And all-prevailing wisdom, when it reaps
 The harvest of its excellence, o'erbounds
 Those obstacles of which an earthly soul
 Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.
 The Spirit's intellectual eye

Its kindred beings recognized.
 The thronging thousands, to a passing view,
 Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.
 How wonderful ! that even
 The passions, prejudices, interests,
 That sway the meanest being, the weak touch
 That moves the finest nerve,
 And in one human brain
 Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link
 In the great chain of nature.

Behold, the Fairy cried,
 Palmyra's ruined palaces !—
 Behold ! where grandeur frowned ;
 Behold where pleasure smiled ;
 What now remains ?—the memory
 Of senselessness and shame—
 What is immortal there ?
 Nothing—it stands to tell
 A melancholy tale, to give
 An awful warning : soon
 Oblivion will steal silently
 The remnant of its fame.
 Monarchs and conquerors there
 Proud o'er prostrate millions trod—
 The earthquakes of the human race ;
 Like them forgotten when the ruin
 That marks their shock is past.

Beside the eternal Nile
 The pyramids have risen.
 Nile shall pursue his changeless way :
 Those pyramids shall fall :
 Yea, not a stone shall stand to tell
 The spot whereon they stood ;
 Their very site shall be forgotten,
 As is their builder's name !

Behold yon sterile spot,
 Where now the wandering Arab's tent
 Flaps in the desert blast,

There once old Salem's haughty fane
 Reared high to heaven its thousand golden domes
 And in the blushing face of day

Exposed its shameful glory.

Oh! many a widow, many an orphan, cursed
 The building of that fane; and many a father,
 Worn out with toil and slavery, implored
 The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth,
 And spare his children the detested task
 Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning
 The choicest days of life,

To soothe a dotard's vanity.

There an inhuman and uncultured race
 Howled hideous praises to their Demon-God;
 They rushed to war, tore from the mother's womb
 The unborn child,—old age and infancy
 Promiscuous perished; their victorious arms
 Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they were fiends!
 But what was he who taught them that the God
 Of nature and benevolence had given
 A special sanction to the trade of blood?
 His name and theirs are fading, and the tales
 Of this barbarian nation, which imposture
 Recites till terror credits, are pursuing
 Itself into forgetfulness.

Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta, stood,
 There is a moral desert now:

The mean and miserable huts,
 The yet more wretched palaces,
 Contrasted with those ancient fanes,
 Now crumbling to oblivion;

The long and lonely colonnades,
 Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks,
 Seem like a well-known tune,

Which, in some dear scene we have loved to hear,
 Remembered now in sadness.
 But, oh! how much more changed,
 How gloomier is the contrast
 Of human nature there!

Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave,

A coward and a fool, spreads death around—

Then, shuddering, meets his own.

Where Cicero and Antonius lived,

A cowed and hypocritical monk

Prays, curses, and deceives.

Spirit! ten thousand years

Have scarcely past away,

Since, in the waste where now the savage drinks

His enemy's blood, and, aping Europe's sons,

Wakes the unholy song of war,

Arose a stately city,

Metropolis of the western continent :

There, now, the mossy column-stone,

Indented by time's unrelaxing grasp

Which once appeared to brave

All, save its country's ruin ;

There the wide forest scene,

Rude in the uncultivated loveliness

Of gardens long run wild,

Seems, to the unwilling sojourner, whose steps

Chance in that desert has delayed,

Thus to have stood since earth was what it is.

Yet once it was the busiest haunt,

Whither, as to a common centre, flocked

Strangers, and ships, and merchandize :

Once peace and freedom blest

The cultivated plain :

But wealth, that curse of man,

Blighted the bud of its prosperity :

Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,

Fled, to return not, until man shall know

That they alone can give the bliss

Worthy a soul that claims

Its kindred with eternity

There's not one atom of yon earth

But once was living man ;

Nor the minutest drop of rain,

That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,

But flowed in human veins :

And from the burning plains
 Where Lybian monsters yell,
 From the most gloomy glens
 Of Greenland's sunless clime,
 To where the golden fields
 Of fertile England spread
 Their harvest to the day,
 Thou canst not find one spot
 Whereon no city stood.

How strange is human pride ;
 I tell thee that those living things,
 To whom the fragile blade of grass,
 That springeth in the morn
 And perishes ere noon,
 Is an unbounded world :
 I tell thee that those viewless beings,
 Whose mansion is the smallest particle
 Of the impassive atmosphere,
 Think, feel, and live, like man ;
 That their affections and antipathies,
 Like his, produce the laws
 Ruling their moral state ;
 And the minutest throb,
 That through their frame diffuses
 The slightest faintest motion,
 Is fixed and indispensable
 As the majestic laws
 That rule yon rolling orbs.

The Fairy paused. The Spirit
 In extacy of admiration, felt
 All knowledge of the past revived ; the events
 Of old and wondrous times,
 Which dim tradition interruptedly
 Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded
 In just perspective to the view,
 Yet dim from their infinitude.
 The spirit seemed to stand
 High on an isolated pinnacle :
 The flood of ages combating below,

The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around
Nature's unchanging harmony.

— 00 —

III.

FAIRY ! the Spirit said,
And on the Queen of Spells
Fixed her ethereal eyes,
I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and taught
A lesson not to be unlearned. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive
Experience from his folly ;
For when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other heaven.

Mab. Turn thee, surpassing Spirit !
Much yet remains unscanned,
Thou knowest how great is man,
Thou knowest his imbecility :
Yet learn thou what he is ;
Yet learn the lofty destiny
Which restless time prepares
For every living soul,

Behold a gorgeous palace, that, amid
Yon populous city, rears its thousand towers
And seems itself a city. Gloomy troops
Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks,
Encompass it around : the dweller there
Cannot be free and happy. Hearest thou not
The curses of the fatherless, the groans
Of those who have no friend ? He passes on :
The king, the wearer of a gilded chain
That binds his soul to abjectness, the fool

Whom courtiers nickname monarch, whilst a slave
 Even to the basest appetites—that man
 Heeds not the shriek of penury ; he smiles
 At the deep curses which the destitute
 Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy
 Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan
 But for those morsels which his wantonness
 Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save
 All that they love for famine : when he hears
 The tale of horror, to some ready-made face
 Of hypocritical assents he turns
 Smothering the glow of shame, that, spite of him,
 Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal
 Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he drags
 His palled unwilling appetite. If gold
 Gleaming around, and numerous viands culled
 From every clime, could force the loathing sense
 To overcome satiety, if wealth
 The spring it draws from poisons not,—or vice
 Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth not
 Its food to deadliest venom,—then that king
 Is happy ; and the peasant who fulfils
 His unforced task, when he returns at even,
 And by the blazing faggot meets again
 Her welcome for whom all his toil is sped,
 Tastes not a sweeter meal.

Behold him now
 Stretched on the gorgeous couch ; his fevered brain
 Reels dizzily awhile ; but ah ! too soon
 The slumber of intemperance subsides,
 And conscience, that undying serpent, calls
 Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task.
 Listen ! he speaks ! oh ! mark that frenzied eye—
 Oh ! mark that deadly visage.

King. No cessation !
 Oh ! must this last for ever ! Awful death,

I wish yet fear to clasp thee !—Not one moment
 Of dreamless sleep ! O dear and blessed peace !
 Why dost thou shroud thy vestal purity
 In penury and dungeons ? wherefore lurkest
 With danger, death, and solitude ; yet shunn'st
 The Palace I have built thee ? Sacred peace !
 Oh visit me but once, and pitying shed
 One drop of balm upon my withered soul.

Vain man ! that palace is the virtuous heart,
 And peace defileth not her snowy robes
 In such a shed as thine. Hark ! yet he mutters ;
 His slumbers are but varied agonies :
 They prey like scorpions on the springs of life.
 There needeth not the hell that bigots frame
 To punish those who err : earth in itself
 Contains at once the evil and the cure ;
 And all-sufficing nature can chastise
 Those who transgress her law ;—she only knows
 How justly to proportion to the fault
 The punishment it merits.

Is it strange
 That this poor wretch should pride him in his woe ?
 Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug
 The scorpion that consumes him ? Is it strange
 That, placed on a conspicuous throne of thorns,
 Grasping an iron sceptre, and immured
 Within a splendid prison, whose stern bounds
 Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth,
 His soul asserts not its humanity ?
 That man's mild nature rises not in war
 Against a king's employ ? No—'tis not strange
 He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts, and lives,
 Just as his father did : the unconquered powers
 Of precedent and custom interpose
 Between a king and virtue. Stranger yet,
 To those who know not nature, nor deduce
 The future from the present, it may seem
 That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes
 Of this unnatural being ; not one wretch,

Whose children famish, and whose nuptial bed
Is earth's unpyting bosom, rears an arm
To dash him from his throne !

Those gilded flies
That, basking in the sunshine of a court,
Fatten on corruption, what are they ?
—The drones of the community ; they feed
On the mechanic's labour : the starved hind
For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield
Its unshared harvests ; and yon squallid form,
Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes
A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,
Drags out in labour a protracted death,
To glut their grandeur ; may faint with toil,
That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.

Whence, thinkest thou, kings and parasites arose ?
Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap
Toil and unvanquishable penury
On those who build their palaces, and bring [vice,
Their daily bread ?—From vice, black loathsome
From rapine, madness, treachery and wrong ;
From all that genders misery, and makes
Of earth this thorny wilderness ; from lust,
Revenge, and murder....And when reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of nature, shall have waked
The nations, and mankind perceive that vice
Is discord, war and misery ; that virtue
Is peace, and happiness, and harmony :
When man's maturer nature shall disdain
The playthings of its childhood ; kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle ; its authority
Will silently pass by ; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,
Fast falling to decay ; whilst falsehood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now.

Where is the fame
Which the vain-glorious mighty of the earth

Seek to eternize ? Oh ! the faintest sound
 From time's light footfall, the minutest wave
 That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing
 The unsubstantial bubble. Ay ! to-day
 Stern is the tyrant's mandates, red the gaze
 That flashes desolation, strong the arm
 That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes
 That mandate is a thunder-peal that died
 In ages past ; that gaze, a transient flash
 On which the midnight closed, and on that arm
 The worm has made his meal.

The virtuous man,
 Who, great in his humility as kings
 Are little in their grandeur ; he who leads
 Invincibly a life of resolute good,
 And stands amid the silent dungeon-depths
 More free and fearless than the trembling judge,
 Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove
 To bind the impassive spirit ; when he falls,
 His mild eye beams benevolence no more :
 Withered the hand outstretched but to relieve ;
 Sunk reason's simple eloquence that rolled
 But to appal the guilty. Yes ! the grave
 Hath quenched that eye, and death's relentless frost
 Withered that arm ; but the unfading fame
 Which virtue hangs upon its votary's tomb ;
 The deathless memory of that man whom kings
 Call to their mind and tremble ; the remembrance,
 With which the happy spirit contemplates
 Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,
 Shall never pass away.

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man ;
 The subject, not the citizen : for kings
 And subjects, mutual foes, for ever play
 A losing game into each other's hands,
 Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man
 Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
 Power, like a desolating pestilence,
 Pollutes whate'er it touches ; and obedience,

Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
 Make slaves of men, and of the human frame
 A mechanized automaton.

When Nero,
 High over flaming Rome, with savage joy
 Lowered like a fiend, drank with enraptured ear
 The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld
 The frightful desolation spread, and felt
 A new created sense within his soul
 Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the sound,
 Thinkest thou his grandeur had not overcome
 The force of human kindness? and when Rome,
 With one stern blow, hurled not the tyrant down,
 Crushed not the arm, red with her dearest blood,
 Had not submissive abjectness destroyed
 Nature's suggestions?

Look on yonder earth:
 The golden harvests spring; the unfailing sun
 Sheds light and life; the fruits, the flowers, the trees,
 Arise in due succession: all things speak
 Peace, harmony, and love. The universe,
 In nature's silent eloquence, declares
 That all fulfil the works of love and joy,—
 All but the outcast man. He fabricates
 The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth
 The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up
 The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
 Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
 Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,
 Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch
 Than on the dome of kings? Is mother earth
 A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn
 Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil;
 A mother only to those pulling babes
 Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men
 The playthings of their babyhood, and mar
 In self-important childishness, that peace
 Which men alone appreciate?
 Spirit of Nature! no.

The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs
 Alike in every human heart.
 Thou, aye, erectest there
 Thy throne of power unappealable :
 Thou art the judge beneath whose nod
 Man's brief and frail authority
 Is powerless as the wind
 That passeth idly by.
 Thine the tribunal which surpasseth
 The show of human justice,
 As God surpasses man.
 Spirit of Nature ! thou
 Life of interminable multitudes ;
 Soul of those mighty spheres [lie ;
 Whose changeless paths thro' Heaven's deep silence
 Soul of that smallest being,
 The dwelling of whose life
 Is one faint April sun-gleam ;—
 Man, like these passive things,
 Thy will unconsciously fulfillet :
 Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
 Will swiftly, surely come ;
 And the unbounded frame, which thou pervadest
 Will be without a flaw
 Marring its perfect symmetry.

—00—

IV.

How beautiful this night ! The balmiest sigh,
 Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear,
 Were discord to the speaking quietude [vault
 That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon
 Studded with stars unutterably bright,
 Thro' which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
 Seems like a canopy which love had spread
 To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills,
 Robed in a garment of untrodden snow ;

Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles depend,
 So stainless, that their white and glittering spires
 Tinge not the moon's pure beam; yon castled steep,
 Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-worn tower
 So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth it
 A metaphor of peace;—all form a scene
 Where musing solitude might love to lift
 Her soul above this sphere of earthliness:
 Where silence undisturbed might watch alone,
 So cold, so bright, so still.

The orb of day,
 In southern climes, o'er ocean's waveless field
 Sinks sweetly smiling; not the faintest breath
 Steals o'er the unruffled deep: the clouds of eve
 Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day:
 And vesper's image on the western main
 Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes:
 Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass,
 Roll o'er the blackened waters; the deep roar
 Of distant thunder mutters awfully;
 Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom
 That shrouds the boiling surge; the pityless fiend,
 With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey—
 The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds a grave
 Beneath its jagged gulf.

Ah! whence yon glare
 That fires the arch of heaven?—that dark red smoke
 Blotting the silver moon? The stars are quenched
 In darkness, and the pure and spangling snow
 Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round.
 Hark to that roar, whose swift and deafening peals
 In countless echoes through the mountains ring,
 Startling pale midnight on her starry throne!
 Now swells the intermingling din. the jar
 Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb;
 The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout,
 The ceaseless clangor, and the rush of men
 Inebriate with rage:—loud, and more loud
 The discord grows; till pale death shuts the scene,

And o'er the conqueror and the conquered draws
 His cold and bloody shroud,—Of all the men
 Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there
 In proud and vigorous health, of all the hearts
 That beat with anxious life at sun-set there,
 How few survive, how few are beating now!
 All in deep silence, like the fearful calm
 That slumbers in the storm's portentous pause,
 Save when the frantic wail of widowed love
 Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan
 With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay
 Wrapt round its struggling powers.

The grey morn
 Dawns on the mournful scene; the sulphurous smoke
 Before the icy wind slow rolls away,
 And the bright beams of frosty morning dance
 Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood
 Even to the forest's depth, and scattered arms,
 And lifeless warriors, whose hard lineaments
 Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path
 Of the outsallying victors: far behind,
 Black ashes note where their proud city stood
 Within yon forest is a gloomy glen—
 Each tree, which guards its darkness from the day,
 Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.

I see thee shrink,
 Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human else?
 I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet
 Across thy stainless features: yet fear not.
 This is no unconnected misery,
 Nor stands uncaused, and irretrievable.
 Man's evil nature, that apology [set up
 Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch,
 For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood
 Which desolates the discord-wasted land.
 From kings, and priests, and statesmen war arose,
 Whose safety is man's deep embittered woe,
 Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe
 Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall:

And, where its envenomed exhalations spread
Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay
Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones
Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,
A garden shall arise, in loveliness
Surpassing fabled Eden.

Hath Nature's soul
(That formed this world so beautiful, that spread
Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord
Strung to unchanging unison, that gave
The happy birds their dwelling in the grove,
That yielded to the wanderers of the deep
The lovely silence of the unfathomed main,
And filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust
With spirit, thought, and love) on Man alone,
Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul
Blasted with withering curses; placed afar
The meteor-happiness, that shuns his grasp.
But, serving on the frightful gulph to glare,
Rent wide beneath his footsteps?

Nature!—no!
Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast the human flower
Even in its tender bud; their influence darts
Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins
Of desolate society. The child,
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,
Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts
His baby-sword even in a hero's mood.
This infant arm becomes the bloodiest scourge
Of devastated earth; whilst specious names,
Learnt in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour,
Serve as the sophisms with which manhood dints
Bright reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword
Unpraised to shed a brother's innocent blood.
Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
Inherits vice and misery, when force
And falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,
Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good.

Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first it peeps
 From its new tenement, and looks abroad
 For happiness and sympathy, how stern
 And desolate a tract is this wide world
 How withered all the buds of natural good!
 No shade, no shelter, from the sweeping storms
 Of pityless power! On its wretched frame,
 Poisoned, perchance, by the disease and woe
 Heaped on the wretched parent whence it sprung
 By morals, law, and custom, the pure winds
 Of heaven, that renovate the insect tribes,
 May breathe not. The untainting light of day
 May visit not its longings. It is bound
 Ere it has life: yea, all the chains are forged
 Long ere its being: all liberty and love
 And peace is torn from its defencelessness;
 Cursed from its birth, even from its cradle doomed
 To abjectness and bondage!

Throughout this varied and eternal world
 Soul is the only element, the block
 That for uncounted ages has remained.
 The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
 Is active living spirit. Every grain
 Is sentient both in unity and part,
 And the minutest atom comprehends
 A world of loves and hatreds; these beget
 Evil and good; hence truth and falsehood spring;
 Hence will, and thought, and action, all the germs
 Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,
 That variegate the eternal universe.
 Soul is not more polluted than the beams
 Of heaven's pure orb, ere round their rapid lines
 The taint of earth-born atmospheres arise.
 Man is of soul and body, formed for deeds
 Of high resolve, on fancy's holdest wing
 To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn
 The keenest pangs to peacefulness, and taste
 The joys which mingled sense and spirit yield.
 Or he is formed for abjectness and woe,
 To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,

To shrink at every sound, to quench the flame
Of natural love in sensualism, to know
That hour as blest when on his worthless days
The frozen hand of death shall set its seal,
Yet fear the cure, though hating the disease.
The one is man that shall hereafter be ;
The other, man as vice has made him now.

War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,
The lawyer's just, the hired assassin's trade,
And, to those royal murderers, whose mean thrones
Are bought by crimes of treachery and gore,
The bread they eat, the staff on which they lean.
Guards, garbed in blood-red livery, surround
Their palaces, participate the crimes
That force defends, and from a nation's rage
Secure the crown, which all the curses reach
That famine, frenzy, woe, and penury, breathe.
These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne—the bullies of his fear.
These are the sinks and channels of worst vice,
The refuse of society, the dregs
Of all that is most vile: their cold hearts blend
Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride,
All that is mean and villanous with rage
Which hopelessness of good and self-contempt
Alone might kindle; they are decked in wealth,
Honour, and power, then are sent abroad
To do their work. The pestilence that stalks
In gloomy triumph through some eastern land
Is less destroying. They cajole with gold,
And promises of fame, the thoughtless youth
Already crushed with servitude: he knows
His wretchedness too late, and cherishes
Repentance for his ruin, when his doom
Is sealed in gold and blood!
These too the tyrant serve, who, skilled to snare
The feet of justice in the toils of law,
Stand ready to oppress the weaker still:
And, right or wrong, will vindicate for gold,
Sneering at public virtue, which beneath

Their pityless tread lies torn and trampled, where
 Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.
 Then grave and hoary-headed hypocrites,
 Without a hope, a passion, or a love,
 Who, through a life of luxury and lies,
 Have crept by flattery to the seats of power,
 Support the system whence their honours flow....
 They have three words: well tyrants know their use,
 Well pay them for the loan, with usury
 Torn from a bleeding world!—God, Hell, and Heaven,
 A vengeful, pityless, and almighty fiend,
 Whose mercy is a nick-name for the rage
 Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.
 Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
 Where poisonous and undying worms prolong
 Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
 Whose life has been a penance for its crimes.
 And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie
 Their human nature, quake, believe and cringe
 Before the mockeries of earthly power.

These tools the tyrant tempers to his work,
 Wields in his wrath, and as he wills destroys,
 Omnipotent in wickedness: the while
 Youth springs, age moulders, manhood tamely does
 His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys to lend
 Force to the weakness of his trembling arm.

They rise, they fall: one generation comes
 Yielding its harvest to destruction's scythe.
 It fades, another blossoms: yet, behold!
 Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on its bloom,
 Withering and cankering deep its passive prime
 He has invented lying words and modes,
 Empty and vain as his own coreless heart;
 Evasive meanings, nothings of much sound,
 To lure the heedless victim to the toils
 Spread round the valley of its paradise.

Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or prince!
 Whether thy trade is falsehood, and thy lusts
 Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor,

With whom thy master was ; or thou delight'st
 In numbering o'er the myriads of thy slain,
 All misery weighing nothing in the scale
 Against thy short-lived fame ; or thou dost load
 With cowardice and crime the groaning land.
 A pomp-fed king—look to thy wretched self!
 Ay, art thou not the veriest slave that e'er
 Crawled on the loathing earth ? Are not thy days
 Days of unsatisfying listlessness ?
 Dost thou not cry, ere night's long rack is o'er,
 When will the morning come ? Is not thy youth
 A vain and feverish dream of sensualism ?
 Thy manhood blighted with unripe disease ?
 Are not thy views of unregretted death
 Dread, comfortless, and horrible ? Thy mind,
 Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame,
 Incapable of judgment, hope, or love ?
 And dost thou wish the errors to survive
 That bar thee from all sympathies of good,
 After the miserable interest
 Thou hold'st in their protraction ? When the grave
 Has swallowed up thy memory and thyself,
 Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth
 To twine its roots around thy confined clay,
 Spring from thy bones, and blossom on thy tomb,
 That of its fruit thy babes may eat and die ?

—oo—

V

THUS do the generations of the earth
 Go to the grave, and issue from the womb,
 Surviving still the imperishable change
 That renovates the world : even as the leaves
 Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
 Has scattered on the forest soil, and heaped
 For many seasons there, though long they choke,
 Loading with loathsome rottenness the land.
 All germs of promise. Yet, when the tall trees
 From which they fell, shorn of their lovely shapes,

Lie level with the earth to moulder there,
They fertilize the land they long deformed,
Till from the breathing lawn a forest springs
Of youth, integrity, and loveliness,
Like that which gave it life, to spring and die.
Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
The fairest feelings of the opening heart,
Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil
Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love,
And judgment cease to wage unnatural war
With passion's unsubduable array.

Twin-sisters of religion, Selfishness !
Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all
The wanton horrors of her bloody play ;
Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless,
Shunning the light, and owning not its name ;
Compelled, by its deformity, to screen
With flimsy veil of justice and of right
Its unattractive lineaments, that scare
All, save the brood of ignorance : at once
The cause and the effect of tyranny ;
Unblushing, ardent, sensual, and vile ;
Dead to all love but of its abjectness,
With heart impassive by more noble powers
Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain, or fame ;
Despising its own miserable being,
Which still it longs yet fears to disenthral.

Hence commerce springs, the venal interchange
Of all that human heart or nature yields ;
Which wealth should purchase not, but want demand,
And natural kindness hasten to supply
From the full fountain of its boundless love,
For ever stifled, drained, and tainted now.
Commerce ! beneath whose poison-breathing shade
No solitary virtue dares to spring,
But poverty and wealth with equal hand
Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
The doors of premature and violent death
To pining famine and full fed disease,

To all that shares the lot of human life,
Which poisoned body and soul scarce drags the chain
That lengthens as it goes, and clanks behind.

Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power
Upon a shining ore, and called it gold ;
Before whose image bow the vulgar great,
The vainly rich, the miserable proud,
The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings,
And with blind feelings reverence the power
That grinds them to the dust of misery.
But in the temple of their hireling hearts
Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.

Since tyrants, by the sale of human life,
Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and fame
To their wide wasting and insatiate pride,
Success has sanctioned to a credulous world
The ruin, the disgrace, the woe, of war.
His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes
The despot numbers; from his cabinet
These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,
Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
A task of cold and brutal drudgery ;—
Hardened to hope, insensible to fear,
Scarce living pullies of a dead machine,
Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth !

The harmony and happiness of man
Yield to the wealth of nations ; that which lifts
His nature to the heaven of its pride
Is bartered for the poison of his soul ;
The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes,
Blighting all prospect but of selfish gain,
Withering all passion but of slavish fear,
Extinguishing all free and generous love
Of enterprise and daring ; even the pulse

That fancy kindles in the beating heart
 To mingle with sensation, it destroys,—
 Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self,
 The groveling hope of interest and gold,
 Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed
 Even by hypocrisy.

And statesmen boast
 Of wealth! The wordy eloquence that lives
 After the ruin of their hearts can gild
 The bitter poison of a nation's woe,
 Can turn the worship of the servile mob
 To their corrupt and glaring idol, fame,
 From virtue, trampled by its iron tread,
 Although its dazzling pedestal be raised
 Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,
 With desolated dwellings smoking round.
 The man of ease, who, by his warm fire-side,
 To deeds of charitable intercourse
 And bare fulfilment of the common laws
 Of decency and prejudice, confines
 The struggling nature of his human heart,
 Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds
 A passing tear perchance upon the wreck
 Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door
 The frightful waves are driven,—when his son
 Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion
 Drives his wife raving mad. But the poor man,
 Whose life is misery, and fear, and care;
 Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil;
 Who ever hears his famished offspring scream,
 Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze
 For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye
 Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene
 Of thousands like himself;—he little heeds
 The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate
 Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn
 The vain and bitter mockery of words,
 Feeling the horror of the tyrant's deeds,
 And unrestrained but by the arm of power,
 That knows and dreads his enmity.

The iron rod of penury still compels
Her wretched slave to bow the knee to wealth,
And poison, with unprofitable toil,
A life too void of solace to confirm
The very chains that bind him to his doom.
Nature, impartial in munificence,
Has gifted man with all-subduing will.
Matter, with all its transitory shapes,
Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,
That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread.
How many a rustic Milton has past by,
Stifling the speechless longings of his heart,
In unremitting drudgery and care!
How many a vulgar Cato has compelled
His energies no longer tameless then,
To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!
How many a Newton, to whose passive ken
Those mighty spheres that gem infinity
Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in heaven
To light the midnights of his native town!

Yet every heart contains perfection's germ:
The wisest of the sages of the earth,
That ever from the stores of reason drew
Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone,
Were but a weak and inexperienced boy.
Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unimbued
With pure desire and universal love,
Compared to that high being, of cloudless brain,
Untainted passion, elevated will,
Which death (who even would linger long indeed
Within his noble presence, and beneath
His changeless eyebeam) might alone subdue.
Him, every save now dragging through the filled
Of some corrupted city his sad life,
Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,
Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense
With narrow schemings and unworthy cares,
Or madly rushing through all violent crime,
To move the deep stagnation of his soul,—
Might imitate and equal.

But mean lust
Has bound its chains so tight around the earth,
That all within it but the virtuous man
Is venal. Gold or fame will surely reach
The price prefixed by selfishness, to all
But him of resolute and unchanging will ;
Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile crowd,
Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,
Can bribe to yield his elevated soul
To tyranny or falsehood, though they wield
With blood-red hand the sceptre of the world

All things are sold : the very light of heaven
Is venal ; earth's unsparing gifts of love,
The smallest and most despicable things
That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
All objects of our life, even life itself,
And the poor pittance wick the laws allow
Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
Those duties which his heart of human love
Should urge him to perform instinctively,
Are bought and sold as in a public mart
Of undisguising selfishness, that sets
On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign.
Even love is sold ; the solace of all woe
Is turned to deadliest agony, old age
Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms,
And youth's corrupted impulses prepare
A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce ; whilst the pestilence that springs
From unenjoying sensualism has filled
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs
Of outraged conscience ; for the slavish priest
Sets no great value on his hireling faith :
A little passing pomp, some servile souls,
Whom cowardice itself might safely chain,
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe
To deck the triumph of their languid zeal,
Can make him minister to tyranny.

More daring crime requires a loftier meed.
 Without a shudder, the slave-soldier lends
 His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart,
 When the dread eloquence of dying men,
 Low mingling on the lonely field of fame,
 Assails that nature whose applause he sells
 For the gross blessings of a patriot mob,
 For the vile gratitude of heartless kings,
 And for a cold world's good word,—viler still ;
 There is a nobler glory, which survives
 Until our being fades, and, solacing
 All human care, accompanies its change ;
 Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's gloom,
 And, in the precincts of the palace, guides
 Its footsteps through that labyrinth of crime :
 Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness,
 Even when, from power's avenging hand, he takes
 Its sweetest, last, and noblest title—death ;—
 The consciousness of good, which neither gold,
 Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss,
 Can purchase ; but a life of resolute good,
 Unalterable will, quenchless desire
 Of universal happiness, the heart
 That beats with it in unison, the brain,
 Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to change
 Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal.

This commerce of sincerest virtue needs
 No mediative signs of selfishness,
 No jealous intercourse of wretched gain,
 No balancings of prudence, cold and long,
 In just and equal measure all is weighed ;
 One scale contains the sum of human weal,
 And one the good man's heart.

How vainly seek
 The selfish for that happiness denied
 To aught but virtue ? Blind and hardened, they
 Who hope for peace amid the storms of care,
 Who covet power they know not how to use,
 And sigh for pleasure they refuse to give,

Madly they frustrate still their own designs ;
And, where they hope that quiet to enjoy
Which virtue pictures, bitterness of soul,
Pining regrets, and vain repentances,
Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade
Their valueless and miserable lives.
But hoary-headed selfishness has felt
Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave :
A brighter morn awaits the human day,
When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
Shall be a commerce of good words and works ;
When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,
The fear of infamy, disease, and woe,
War with its million horrors, and fierce hell,
Shall live but in the memory of time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger years.



VI.

All touch, all eye, all ear,
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning speech.
O'er the thin texture of its frame
The varying periods painted changing glows,
As on a summer even,
When soul-enfolding music floats around,
The stainless mirror of the lake
Re-images the eastern gloom,
Mingling convulsively its purple hues
With sunset's burnished gold.

Then thus the Spirit spoke :
It is a wild and miserable world !
Thorny, and full of care,
Which every fiend can make his prey at will
O Fairy ! in the lapse of years,
Is there no hope in store ?
Will yon vast suns roll on
Interminably, still illuming

The night of so many wretched souls,
And see no hope for them ?
Will not the universal Spirit e'er
Revivify this withered limb of Heaven ?

The Fairy calmly smiled
In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope
Suffused the Spirit's lineaments.
Oh ! rest thee tranquil ; chase those fearful doubts,
Which ne'er could rack an everlasting soul,
That sees the chains which bind it to its doom.
Yes ! crime and misery are in yonder earth,
Falsehood, mistake, and lust ;
But the eternal world
Contains at once the evil and the cure.
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest time ;
The truths of their pure lips, that never die,
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath
Of ever-living flame.
Until the monster sting itself to death.
How sweet a scene will earth become !
Of purest spirits, a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary spheres ;
When man, with changeless nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.

Spirit ! on yonder earth,
Falsehood now triumphs ; deadly power
Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth !
Madness and misery are there !
The happiest is most wretched ! Yet confide
Until pure health-drops, from the cup of joy,
Fall like a dew of balm upon the world.
Now, to the scene I shew, in silence turn,
And read the blood-stain'd charter of all woe
Which nature soon, with recreating hand,

Will blot in mercy from the book of earth.
How bold the flight of passion's wandering wing,
How swift the step of reason's firmer tread,
How calm and sweet the victories of life,
How terrorless the triumph of the grave!
How powerless were the mightiest monarch's arm,
Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown!
How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar!
The weight of his exterminating curse,
How light! and his affected charity,
To suit the pressure of the changing times,
What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid,
Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,
And heaven with slaves!

Thou taintest all thou lookest upon!—The stars,
Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distempered playfulness
Of thy untutored infancy: the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becamest a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief
Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;
Thine eager gaze scanned the stupendous scene,
Whose wonders mocked the knowledge of thy pride
Their everlasting and unchanging laws
Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile thou stood'st
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
The elements of all that thou didst know;
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,

The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
 The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
 The sunrise, and the setting of the moon,
 Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
 And all their causes, to an abstract point,
 Converging, thou didst bend, and called it God ;
 The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,
 The merciful, and the avenging God !
 Who, prototype of human misrule, sits
 High in Heaven's realm, upon a golden throne,
 Even like an earthly king : and whose dread work,
 Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy slaves
 Of fate, whom he created in his sport,
 To triumph in their torments when they fell !
 Earth heard the name ; earth trembled, as the smoke
 Of his revenge ascended up to Heaven,
 Blotting the constellations : and the cries
 Of millions, butchered in sweet confidence
 And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds
 Of safety were confirmed by wordy oaths
 Sworn in his dreadful name, rung through the land ;
 Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear,
 And thou didst laugh to hear the mother's shriek
 Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel
 Felt cold in her torn entrails !

Religion ! thou wert then in manhood's prime ;
 But age crept on : one God would not suffice
 For senile puerility ; thou fram'dst
 A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut
 Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad fiend
 Thy wickedness had pictured might afford
 A plea for sating the unnatural thirst
 For murder, rapine, violence, and crime,
 That still consumed thy being, even when
 Thou heard'st the step of fate :—that flames might light
 Thy funeral scene, and the shrill horrent shrieks
 Of parents dying on the pile that burned
 To light their children to thy paths, the roar
 Of the encircling flames, the exulting cries
 Of thine apostles, loud commingling there,

Might sate thy hungry ear
Even on the bed of death !

But now contempt is mocking thy grey hairs ;
Thou art descending to the darksome grave,
Unhonored and unpitied, but by those
Whose pride is passing by like thine, and sheds
Like thine, a glare that fades before the sun
Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night
That long has lowered above the ruined world.

Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,
Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused
A spirit of activity and life,
That knows no term, cessation, nor decay ;
That fades not when the lamp of earthly life,
Extinguished in the dampness of the grave,
Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe
In the dim newness of its being feels
The impulses of sublunary things,
And all is wonder to unpractised sense :
But, active, steadfast, and eternal, still
Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,
Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,
Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease ;
And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly
Rolls round the eternal universe, and shakes
Its undecaying battlement, presides,
Apportioning with irresistible law
The place each spring of its machine shall fill ;
So that, when waves on waves tumultuous heap
Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely driven
Heaven's lightnings scorch the uprooted ocean-fords,
Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked mariner,
Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering rock,
All seems unlinked contingency and chance .
No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act
Even the minutest molecule of light,
That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow

Fulfil its destined though invisible work,
 The universal Spirit guides ; nor less,
 When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,
 Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-field,
 That, blind, they there may dig each other's graves,
 And call the sad work glory, does it rule
 All passions: not a thought, a will, an act,
 No working of the tyrant's moody mind,
 Nor one misgiving of the slaves who boast
 Their servitude, to hide the shame they feel,
 Nor the events enchainning every will,
 That from the depths of unrecorded time
 Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass
 Unrecognised or anforeseen by thee,
 Soul of the Universe ! eternal spring
 Of life and death, of happiness and woe,
 Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene
 That floats before our eyes in wavering light,
 Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison,
 Whose chains and massy walls
 We feel, but cannot see.

Spirit of Nature ! all-sufficing Power,
 Necessity ! thou mother of the world !
 Unlike the God of humanerror, thou
 Requirest no prayers nor praises. The caprice
 Of man's weak will belongs no more to thee
 Than do the changeful passions of his breast
 To thy unvarying harmony : the slave,
 Whose horrible lusts spread misery o'er the world,
 And the good man, who lifts with virtuous pride
 His being, in the sight of happiness,
 That springs from his own works ; the poison-tree,
 Beneath whose shade all life is withered up,
 And the fair oak, whose leafy dome affords
 A temple where the vows of happy love
 Are registered, are equal in thy sight,
 No love, no hate thou cherishest ; revenge,
 And favoritism, and worst desire of fame,
 Thou knowest not : all that the wide world contains
 Are but thy passive instruments, and thou

Regard'st them all with an impartial eye,
Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,
Because thou hast not human sense,
Because thou art not human mind.

Yes! when the sweeping storm of time
Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruined fanes
And broken altars of the almighty fiend
Whose name usurps thy honours, and the blood,
Through centuries clotted there, has floated down
The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou live
Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to thee,
Which, nor the tempest-breath of time,
Nor the interminable flood
Over earth's slight pageant rolling,
Availeth to destroy,—
The sensitive extension of the world.
That wondrous and eternal fane,
Where pain and pleasure, good and evil, join
To do the will of strong necessity,
And life, in multitudinous shapes,
Still pressing forward where no term can be,
Like hungry and unresting flame
Curls round the eternal columns of its strength.

—00—

VII.

Spirit. I was an infant when my mother went
To see an atheist burned. She took me there:
The dark-robed priests were met around the pile;
The multitude was gazing silently;
And, as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth:
The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon.
His death-pang rent my heart! The insensate mob
Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.

O Spirit! through the sense
 By which thy inner nature was apprised
 Of outward shows, vague dreams have rolled,
 And varied reminiscences have waked
 Tablets that never fade.
 All things have been imprinted there—
 The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky,
 Even the unshapeliest lineaments
 Of wild and fleeting visions
 Have left a record there
 To testify of earth.
 These are my empire, for to me is given
 The wonders of the human world to keep,
 And fancy's thin creations to endow
 With manner, being, and reality ;
 Therefore a wondrous phantom, from the dreams
 Of human error's dense and purblind faith,
 I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.
 Ahasuerus, rise !

A strange and woe-worn wight
 Arose beside the battlement,
 And stood unmoving there.
 His inessential figure cast no shade
 Upon the golden floor;
 His port and mien bore mark of many years,
 And chronicles of untold ancientness
 Were legible within his beamless eye:
 Yet his cheek bore the mark of youth.
 Freshness and vigour knit his manly frame ;
 The wisdom of old age was mingled there
 With youth's primæval dauntlessness ;
 And inexpressible woe,
 Chastened by fearless resignation, gave
 An awful grace to his all-speaking brow.
Spirit. Is there a God ?
Ahasuerus. Is there a God !—ay, an Almighty God,
 And vengeful as Almighty ! Once his voice
 Was heard on earth : earth shuddered at the sound.
 The fiery-visaged firmament expressed

Abhorrence, and the grave of nature yawned
 To swallow all the dauntless and the good
 That dared to hurl defiance at his throne,
 Girt as it was with power. None but slaves
 Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who did the work
 Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose souls
 No honest indignation ever urged
 To elevated daring, to one deed
 Which gross and sensual self did not pollute.
 These slaves built temples for the omnipotent fiend,
 Gorgeous and vast: the costly altars smoked
 With human blood, and hideous pæans rung
 Through all the long-drawn aisles. A murderer heard
 His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts and arts
 Had raised him to his eminence in power,
 Accomplice of omnipotence in crime,
 And confidant of the all-knowing one.
 These were Jehovah's words.

From an eternity of idleness
 I, God, awoke: in seven days' toil made earth
 From nothing; rested, and created man.
 I placed him in a paradise, and there
 Planted the tree of evil, so that he
 Might eat and perish, and my soul procure
 Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn,
 Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
 All misery to my fame. The race of men,
 Chosen to my honour, with impunity
 May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.
 Here I command thee hence to lead them on,
 Until, with hardened feet, their conquering troops
 Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood,
 And make my name be dreaded through the land.
 Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless woe
 Shall be the doom of their eternal souls,
 With every soul on this ungrateful earth,
 Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—even all
 Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
 (Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.

The murderer's brow
Quivered with horror.

God omnipotent,
Is there no mercy? must our punishment
Be endless? will long ages roll away,
And see no term? Oh! wherefore hast thou made
In mockery and wrath this evil earth?
Mercy becomes the powerful—be but just:
O God! repent and save.

One way remains.
I will beget a son, and he shall bear
The sins of all the world: he shall arise
In an unnoticed corner of the earth,
And there shall die upon a cross, and purge
The universal crime; so that the few
On whom my grace descends, those who are marked
As vessels to the honour of their God,
May credit this strange sacrifice, and save
Their souls alive. Millions shall live and die
Who ne'er shall call upon their Saviour's name,
But, unredeemed, go to the gaping grave.
Thousands shall deem it an old woman's tale,
Such as the nurses frighten babes withal.
These in a gulph of anguish and of flame
Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to avow,
Even on their beds of torment, where they howl,
My honour, and the justice of their doom.
What then avail their virtuous deeds, their thoughts
Of purity, with radiant genius bright,
Or lit with human reason's earthly ray?
Many are called, but few will I elect.
Do thou my bidding, Moses!

Even the murderer's cheek
Was blanched with horror, and his quivering lips
Scarce faintly uttered—O Almighty One,
I tremble and obey!

O Spirit! centuries have set their seal
On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain,
Since the Incarnate came. Humbly he came,
Veiling his horrible Godhead in the shape
Of man, scorned by the world, his name unheard,
Save by the rabble of his native town,
Even as a parish demagogue. He led
The crowd: he taught them justice, truth and peace
In semblance; but he lit within their souls
The quenchless flames of zeal, and bless'd the sword
He brought on earth to satiate with the blood
Of truth and freedom his malignant soul.
I stood beside him; on the torturing cross
No pain assailed his unterrestrial sense,
And yet he groaned. Indignantly I summed
The massacres and miseries which his name
Had sanctioned in my country, and I cried—
Go! go! in mockery.

A smile of godlike malice re-illuminated
His fading lineaments.—I go, he cried,
But thou shalt wander o'er the unquiet earth
Eternally.—The dampness of the grave
Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,
And long lay tranced upon the charmed soil.
When I awoke hell burned within my brain,
Which staggered on its seat; for all around
The mouldering relics of my kindred lay,
Even as the Almighty's ire arrested them,
And in their various attitudes of death
My murdered children's mute and eyeless skulls
Glared ghastlily upon me.

But my soul,
From sight and sense of the polluting woe
Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer
Hell's freedom to the servitude of heaven
Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began
My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unwearable war
With my almighty tyrant, and to hurl

Defiance at his impotence to harm
 Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand
 That barred my passage to the peaceful grave
 Has crushed the earth to misery, and given
 Its empire to the chosen of his slaves.
 These have I seen, even from the earliest dawn.
 Of weak, unstable, and precarious, power;
 Then preaching peace, as now they practise war,
 So, when they turned but from the massacre
 Of unoffending infidels, to quench
 Their thirst for ruin in the very blood
 That flowed in their own veins, and pityless zeal
 Froze every human feeling, as the wife
 Sheathed in her husband's heart the sacred steel,
 Even whilst its hopes were dreaming of her love :
 And friends to friends, brothers to brothers, stood,
 Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war,
 Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught waged,
 Drunk from the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath ;
 Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace,
 Pointed to victory ! When the fray was done,
 No remnant of the exterminated faith
 Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh,
 With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere,
 That rotted on the half-extinguished pile.

Yes ! I have seen God's worshippers unsheath
 The sword of his revenge, when grace descended,
 Confirming all unnatural impulses,
 To sanctify their desolating deeds ;
 And frantic priests waved the ill-omened cross
 O'er the unhappy earth : then shone the sun
 On showers of gore from the upflashing steel
 Of safe assassination, and all crime
 Made stingless by the spirits of the Lord,
 And blood-red rainbows canopied the land.

Spirit ! no year of my eventful being
 Has passed unstained by crime and misery, [slaves
 Which flows from God's own faith. I've marked his
 With tongues whose lies are venomous, beguile

The insensate mob, and, whilst one hand was red
With murder, feign to stretch the other out
For brotherhood and peace: and, that they now
Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds
Are marked with all the narrowness and crime.
That freedom's young arm dares not yet chastise,
Reason may claim our gratitude, who now,
Establishing the imperishable throne
Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh vain
The unprevailing malice of my foe,
Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave,
Adds impotent eternities to pain,
Whilst keenest disappointment racks his breast
To see the smiles of peace around them play,
To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.

Thus have I stood, through a wild waste of years,
Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony,
Yet peaceful and serene, and self-enshrined,
Mocking my powerless tyrant's horrible curse
With stubborn and unalterable will,
Even as a giant oak, which heaven's fierce flame
Had scathed in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there;
Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves
The midnight conflict of the wintry storm,
As in the sun-light's calm it spreads
Its worn and withered arms on high,
To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.

The Fairy waved her wand:
Ahasuerus fled
Fast as the shapes of mingled shade and mist,
That lurk in the glens of a twilight grove,
Flee from the morning beam:
The matter of which dreams are made
Not more endowed with actual life
Than this phantasmal portraiture
Of wandering human thought.

VIII.

The present and the past thou hast beheld :
 It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit, learn
 The secrets of the future.—Time !
 Unfold the brooding pinion of thy gloom,
 Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,
 And from the cradles of eternity,
 Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep
 By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,
 Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold
 Thy glorious destiny !

Joy to the Spirit came.
 Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil
 Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear ;
 Earth was no longer hell ;
 Love, freedom, health, had given
 Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,
 And all its pulses beat
 Symphonious to the planetary spheres !
 Then dulcet music swelled
 Concordant with the life-strings of the soul ;
 It throbbed in sweet and languid beatings there,
 Catching new life from transitory death—
 Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,
 That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea,
 And dies on the creation of its breath,
 And sinks and rises, falls and swells, by fits,
 Was the pure stream of feeling
 That sprang from these sweet notes,
 And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies
 With mild and gentle motion calmly flowed.

Joy to the Spirit came,—
 Such joy as when a lover sees
 The chosen of his soul in happiness
 And witnesses her peace
 Whose woe to him were bitterer than death,
 Sees her unfaded cheek
 Glow mantling in first luxury of health,

Thrills with her lovely eyes,
Which like two stars amid the heaving main
Sparkle through liquid bliss,
Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy Queen :
I will not call the ghost of ages gone
To unfold the frightful secrets of its lore ;

The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the earth
Have faded from the memory of Time,
Who dares not give reality to that
Whose being I annul. To me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
Space, matter, time, and mind. Futurity
Exposes now its treasure : let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.
O human Spirit ! spur thee to the goal
Where virtue fixes universal peace,
And, midst the ebb and flow of human things,
Show somewhat stable, somewhat certain still,—
A lighthouse o'er the wild of dreary waves.

The habitable earth is full of bliss,
Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate nor live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed ;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean deep, that rolls
Its broad bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is wakened into echoes sweet
To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves,
And melodize with man's blest nature there.

Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age-collected fervours scarce allowed
A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and shady woods,
Corn-fields, and pastures, and white cottages :

And, where the startled wilderness beheld
 A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,
 A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs,
 The unnatural famine of her toothless cubs,
 While shouts and howlings through the desert rang,
 Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn,
 Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles
 To see a babe before his mother's door,
 Sharing his morning's meal
 With the green and golden basilisk
 That comes to lick his feet.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail
 Has seen above the illimitable plain,
 Morning on night, and night on morning, rise,
 Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread
 Its shadowy mountains on the sun-bright sea,
 Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves
 So long have mingled with the gusty wind
 In melancholy loneliness, and swept
 The desert of those ocean solitudes,
 But vocal to the sea-birds harrowing shriek,
 The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,
 Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds
 Of kindest human impulses respond.
 Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,
 With lightsome clouds and shining seas between
 And fertile vallies, resonant with bliss,
 Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,
 Which, like a toil worn labourer leaps to shore,
 To meet the kisses of the flowrets there.

All things are recreated, and the flame
 Of consentaneous love inspires all life :
 The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck
 To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
 Rewarding her with their pure perfectness :
 The balmy breathings of the wind inhale
 Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad :
 Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere,
 Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream :

No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,
Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride
The foliage of the ever-verdant trees ;
But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,
And autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of spring.
Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.

The lion now forgets to thirst for blood:
There might you see him sporting in the sun
Beside the deadless kid ; his claws are sheathed,
His teeth are harmless ; custom's force has made
His nature as the nature of a lamb.
Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's tempting bane
Poisons no more the pleasure it bestows :
All bitterness is past ; the cup of joy
Unmingled mantles to the goblet's brim,
And courts the thirsty lips it fled before.

But chief, ambiguous man, he that can know
More misery, and dream more joy, than all ;
Whose keen sensations thrill within his breast
To mingle with a loftier instinct there,
Lending their power to pleasure and to pain,
Yet raising, sharpening, and refining, each ;
Who stands amid the ever-varying world,
The burthen or the glory of the earth ;
He chief perceives the change : his being notes
The gradual renovation, and defines
Each movement of its progress on his mind.

Man, where the gloom of the long polar night
Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,
Where scarce the hardest herb that braves the frost
Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,
Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night ;
His chilled and narrow energies, his heart,
Insensible to courage, truth, or love,
His stunted stature and imbecile frame,
Marked him for some abortion of the earth,

Fit compeer of the bears that roamed around
Whose habits and enjoyments were his own :
His life a feverish dream of stagnant woe,
Whose meagre wants, but scantily fulfilled,
Apprised him ever of the joyless length
Which his short being's wretchedness had reached ;
His death a pang which famine, cold, and toil,
Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital spark
Clung to the body stubbornly, had brought :
All was inflicted here that earth's revenge
Could wreak on the infringers of her law ;
One curse alone was spared—the name of God.

Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day
With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,
Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed
Unnatural vegetation, where the land
Teemed with all earthquake, tempest, and disease,
Was man a nobler being. Slavery
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust.
Or he was bartered for the sake of power,
Which, all internal impulses destroying,
Makes human will an article of trade ;
Or he was changed with Christians for their gold,
And dragged to distant isles, where, to the sound
Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does the work
Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,
Which doubly visits on the tyrants' heads
The long-protracted fulness of their woe ;
Or he was led to legal butchery,
To turn to worms beneath that burning sun,
Where kings first leagued against the rights of men,
And priests first traded with the name of God.

Even where the milder zone afforded man
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,
Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,
Spread like a quenchless fire ; nor truth till late
Availed to arrest its progress, or create
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved

Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime :
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,
The mirror of surrounding misery,
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
The blood-hound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind,
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires.
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,
Which from the exhaustless lore of human woe
Draws on the virtuous mind the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks
The unprevailing hoariness of age,
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands
Immortal upon earth : no longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face,
And horribly devours his mangled flesh,
Which, still avenging nature's broken law,
Kindled all putrid humours in his frame,
All evil passions, and all vain belief,
Hatred, despair, and loathing, in his mind,
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.
No longer now the winged habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man ; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play
All things are void of terror : man has lost
His terrible prerogative, and stands
An equal amidst equals : happiness
And science dawn though late upon the earth,
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame ;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
Reason and passion cease to combat there,
Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth extends

Its all-subduing energies, and wields
The sceptre of a vast dominion there ;
Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth
To decorate its paradise of peace

—00—

IX.

O happy Earth ! reality of Heaven !
To which those restless souls, that ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe, aspire ;
Thou consummation of all mortal hope !
Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will !
Whose rays diffused throughout all space and time,
Verge to one point, and blend for ever there .
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place !
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,
Languor, disease, and ignorance, dare not come
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven !

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined
Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss
Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.
Thou art the end of all desire and will,
The product of all action ; and the souls
That by the paths of an aspiring change
Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace,
There rest from the eternity of toil
That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee in his fear
That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride,
So long had ruled the world, that nations fell
Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,

That for milleniums had withstood the tide
Of human things, his storm-breath drove in sand
Across that desert where their stones survived
The name of him whose pride had heaped them there,
Yon monarch, in his solitary point,
Was but the mushroom of a summer-day,
That his light-winged footsteps pressed to dust.
Time was the king of earth: all things gave way
Before him, but the fixed and virtuous will,
The sacred sympathies of soul and sense,
That mocked his fury and prepared his fall.
Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn of love,
Long lay the clouds of darkness o'er the scene
Till from its native heaven they rolled away:
First, crime triumphant o'er all hope careered
Unblushing, undisguising, bold, and strong;
Whilst falsehood, tricked in virtue's attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,
Till, done by her own venomous sting to death,
She left the moral world without a law,
No longer fettering passion's fearless wing,
Nor searing reason with the brand of God.
Then steadily the happy ferment worked;
Reason was free: and wild though passion went
Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads,
Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,
Yet, like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow,
Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child,
No longer trembling at the broken rod.

Mild was the slow necessity of death:
The tranquil Spirit failed beneath its grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
And full of wonder, full of hope, as he.
The deadly germs of languor and disease
Died in the human frame, and purity
Blest with all gifts her earthly worshippers:
How vigorous then the athletic form of age!
How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!

Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care,
Had stamped the seal of grey deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth !
With meek-eyed courage decked with freshest grace ;
Courage of soul, that dreaded not a name,
And elevated will, that journeyed on
Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness,
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand.

Then, that sweet bondage which is freedom's self,
And rivets with sensation's softest tie
The kindred sympathies of human souls,
Needed no fetters of tyrannic law ;
Those delicate and timid impulses
In nature's primal modesty arose,
And with undoubting confidence disclosed
The growing longings of its dawning love,
Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity,
That virtue of the cheaply virtuous,
Who pride themselves in senselessness and frost.
No longer prostitution's venom'd bane
Poisoned the springs of happiness and life :
Woman and man, in confidence and love
Equal and free and pure, together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more
Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.

Then, where, through distant ages, long in pride
The place of the monarch-slave had mocked
Famine's faint groan and penury's silent tear,
A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and threw
Year after year their stones upon the field,
Wakening a lonely echo ; and the leaves
Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower
Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur, shook
In the stern storm that swayed the topmost tower.
And whispered strange tales in the whirlwind's ear.
Low through the lone cathedral's roofless aisles
The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung :
It were a sight of awfulness to see

The works of faith and slavery, so vast,
So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal !
Even as the corpse that rests beneath its wall.
A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death
To-day ; the breathing marble glows above
To decorate its memory, and tongues
Are busy of its life ; to-morrow, worms
In silence and in darkness seize their prey.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,
Fearless and free, the ruddy children played,
Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows
With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom ;
The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,
There rusted amid heaps of broken stone
That mingled slowly with their native earth :
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once
Lighted the cheek of lean captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, then freely shone
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness :
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair
Pealed through the echoing vaults, but soothing note
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds
And merriment were resonant around.

These ruins soon left not a wreck behind :
Their elements, wide scattered o'er the globe,
To happier shapes were moulded, and became
Ministrant to all blissful impulses :
Thus human things were perfected, and earth,
Even as a child beneath its mother's love,
Was strengthened in all excellence, and grew
Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past
Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done :
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,
With all the fear and all the hope they bring
My spells are past ; the present now recurs.

Ah me ! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change ;
For birth and life and death, and that strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal :
For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense
Of outward shews, whose unexperienced shape
New modes of passion to its frame may lead ;
Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there
That variegate the eternal universe ;
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies
Of happy regions of eternal hope.
Therefore, O Spirit ! fearlessly bear on :
Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
To feed with kindest dews its favourite flower,
That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,
Lighting the green-wood with its sunny smile.
Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,
So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch burns ;
'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,
The transient gulph-dream of a starting sleep
Death is no foe to virtue : earth has seen
Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,
Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,
And presaging the truth of vision'd bliss.
Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene
Of linked and gradual being has confirmed ?
Whose stings bade thy heart look further still,
When, to the moonlight walk by Henry led,

Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death ?
 And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast,
 Listening supinely to a bigot's creed ;
 Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod,
 Whose iron thongs are red with human gore ?
 Never : but bravely bearing on, thy will
 Is destined an eternal war to wage
 With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot
 The germs of misery from the human heart.
 Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
 The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
 Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
 Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease :
 Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
 Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
 When fenced by power and master of the world.
 Thou art sincere and good ; of resolute mind,
 Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,
 Of passion lofty, pure, and unsubdued.
 Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,
 And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
 Which thou hast now received : virtue shall keep
 Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,
 And many days of beaming hope shall bless
 Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
 Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy
 Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
 Light, life, and rapture, from thy smile.

The fairy waves her wand of charm.
 Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car
 That rolled beside the battlement,
 Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.
 Again the enchanted steeds were yoked,
 Again the burning wheels inflame
 The steep descent of heaven's untrodden way
 Fast and far the chariot flew :
 The vast and fiery globes that rolled
 Around the Fairy's palace-gate
 Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared
 Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs

That there attendant on the solar power
 With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.
 Earth floated then below :
 The chariot paused a moment there ;
 The Spirit then descended :
 The restless coursers pawed the ungenial soil,
 Snuffed the gross air, and then, their errand done,
 Unfurled their pinions to the winds of heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then,
 A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame :
 Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed ;
 Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained :
 She looked around in wonder, and beheld
 Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch,
 Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,
 And the bright-beaming stars
 That through the casement shone.

THE END OF QUEEN MAB.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

A LYRICAL DRAMA.

—00—

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS.
DEMOGORGON.
JUPITER.
THE EARTH.
OCEAN.
APOLLO.
MERCURY.
HERCULES.

ASIA.	} Oceanides.
PANTHEA.	
IONE.	
THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER	
THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.	
SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.	
SPIRITS, ECHOES, FAUNS.	
FURIES.	

ACT I.

Scene, a ravine of icy rocks in the Indian Caucasus.
PROMETHEUS is discovered bound to the precipice. PANTHEA and IONE are seated by his feet. Time, night.
During the scene, morning slowly breaks.

Pro MONARCH of Gods and Demons, and all Spirits
 But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
 Which Thou and I alone of living things
 Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth,
 Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
 Requistest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
 And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
 With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
 Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,

Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!
Almighty, had I designed to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape, or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing chrystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones,
Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east: for then they lead
The wingless crawling hours, one among whom

—As some Dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
 Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
 From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
 If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
 Disdain! ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
 Will hunt the undefended thro' the wide Heaven!
 How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
 Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
 Not exultation, for I hate no more,
 As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
 Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
 Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist
 Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
 Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
 Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
 Shuddering thro' India! Thou serenest Air,
 Thro' which the Sun walks burning without beams!
 And ye, swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings
 Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
 As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
 The orb'd world! If then my words had power,
 Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
 Is dead within; although no memory be.
 Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
 What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

First Voice : from the mountains.

Thrice three hundred thousand years
 O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood :
 Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
 We trembled in our multitude.

Second Voice : from the springs.

Thunder-bolts had parched our water,
 We had been stained with bitter blood,
 And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
 Thro' a city and a solitude.

Third voice : from the air.

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
 Its wastes in colours not their own,

And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan

Fourth Voice: from the whirlwinds.

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under,
Ever made us mute with wonder.

First Voice.

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

Second Voice.

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!"
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

Third Voice.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven:
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

Fourth Voice

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is a hell to us

The Earth. The tongueless caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'

Pro. I hear a sound of voices: not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou

Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
 Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
 Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
 Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
 The Titan? He who made his agony
 The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
 Oh, rock-embosom'd lawns, and snow-fed streams,
 Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
 Thro' whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once
 With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
 Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
 To commune with me? me alone, who check'd,
 As one who checks a fiend-drawn charloteer,
 The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
 Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
 Fills your dim gleus and liquid wildernesses:
 Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

The Earth. They dare not.

Pro. Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.
 Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!
 'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles thro' the frame
 As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strikes.
 Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice
 I only know that thou art moving near
 And love. How cursed I him?

The Earth. How canst thou hear
 Who knowest not the language of the dead?

Pro. Thou art a living spirit: speak as they. [King

The Earth. I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell
 Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
 More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
 Subtle thou art and good, and tho' the Gods
 Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God
 Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now.

Pro. Obscurely thro' my brain, like shadows dim,
 Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
 Faint, like one mingled in entwining love.
 Yet 'tis not pleasure.

The Earth. No, thou canst not hear:
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
 Only to those who die.

Pro. And what art thou,
O melancholy Voice?

The Earth. I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves tremble in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us: their inhabitants beheld
My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled;
When Plague had fallen on man and beast, and worm
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief: and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer: aye, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and you wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words,
But dare not speak them.

Pro. Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,

And love, though fleeting ; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

The Earth. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death.
One that which thou behoidest ; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more ;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime, and beauteous shapes.
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade.
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains ; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast sceptred phantoms ; heroes, men, and beasts ;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom ;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Cail at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades, or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all prolific Evil since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons,
Ask, and they must reply : so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep thro' vacant shades,
As rainy wind thro' the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

Pro. Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear !

Ione. My wings are folded o'er mine ears
My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes :
Yet thro' their silver shade appears
And thro' their billowing plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds ;

May it be no ill to thee,
 O thou of many wounds!
 Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
 Ever thus we watch and wake.

Pan. The sound is of whirlwind underground,
 Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
 The shape is awful like the sound,
 Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
 A sceptre of pale gold
 To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
 His veined hand doth hold.
 Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
 Like one who does, not suffers, wrong.

Chorus of Jupiter. Why have the secret powers of this
 strange world
 Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
 On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
 Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
 With which our pallid race hold ghasty talk
 In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

Pro. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
 He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
 The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
 Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

The Earth. Listen! And tho' your echoes must be
 mute,
 Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
 Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
 Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

Phan. A spirit seizes me and speaks within.
 It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

Pan. See, how he lifts his mighty looks! the Heaven
 Darkens above.

Ione He speaks! O shelter me!

Pro. I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll : yet speak : Oh, speak !

Phantasm. Fiend, I defy thee ! With a calm fixed mind
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do ;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
• One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying tear ;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Aye, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love :
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate ;
And thus devote to sleepless agony
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord : O thou
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship : all-prevailing foe !
I curse thee ! Let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse ;
'Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony,
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good

Both infinite as is the universe,
 And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
 An awful image of calm power
 Though now thou sittest, let the hour
 Come when thou must appear to be
 That which thou art internally,
 And after many a false and fruitless crime [time.
 Scorn track thy lagging fall thro' boundless space and

Pro. Were these my words, O Parent ?

The Earth. They were thine

Pro. It doth repent me : words are quick and vain ;
 Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
 I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

The Earth. Misery, O misery to me,
 That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
 Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
 The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
 Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,
 Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and vanquished

First Echo. Lies fallen and vanquished !

Second Echo. Fallen and vanquished !

Ione. Fear not : 'tis but some passing spasm,
 The Titan is unvanquished still,
 But see, where, thro' the azure chasm
 Of yon forked and snowy hill,
 Trampling the slant winds on high
 With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
 Under plumes of purple dye,
 Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
 A Shape comes now,
 Stretching on high from his right hand
 A serpent-cinctured wand.

Pan. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury

Ione. And who are those with hydra tresses
 And iron wings that climb the wind,
 Whom the frowning God represses

Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

Pan. These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

Jone. Are they now led from the thin dead
On new jaugs to be fed?

Pan. The Titan looks, as ever, firm, not proud.

First Fury. Ha! I scent life!

Second Fury. Let me but look into his eyes!

Third Fury. The hope of torturing him smells
Of corpses to a death-bird after battle. [cheer, &c.]

First Fury. Darest thou delay, O Herald?
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please
The Omnipotent?

Mer. Back to your towers of iron,
And gash beside the streams of fire and wail
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.

First Fury. O mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

Mer. Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer,
To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, heaven seems hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now the Torturer and

Pro. Evil minds

Lecture 10: The Liar Paradox

Enduring thus, the retributive hour,
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour : fear delay :
Behold ! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown

Mer. Oh, that we might be spared : I to inflict
And thou to suffer ! Once more answer me :
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power ?

Pro. I know but this, that it must come.

Mer. Alas !

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain ?

Pro. They last while Jove must reign : nor more
Do I desire or fear.

Mer. Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless ;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou might'st spend in torture, unreprieved

Pro. Perchance no thought can count them, y
pass.

Mer. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods th
Lapped in voluptuous joy,

Pro. I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

Mer. Alas ! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

Pro. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned : how vain is talk !
Call up the fiends

Ione. O sister, look ! White fire
Has cloven to the roots of yon huge snow-loaded
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind !

Mer. I must obey his words and thine : alas !
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart !

Pan. See where the child of Heaven, with wing
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

Ione. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine e
Lest thou behold and die : they come : they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings
And hollow underneath like death.

First Fury. Prometheus!

Second Fury. Immortal Titan!

Third Fury. Champion of Heaven's slaves!

Pro. He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul thro' monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

First Fury. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime; and, as lean dogs pursue
Thro' wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.

Pro. Oh! many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathed selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

Second Fury. We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice re-
joice!

Pro. Can aught exult in its deformity?

Second Fury. The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another: so are we.

As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round,
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

Pro. I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

First Fury. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone
from bone,

And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

Pro. Pain is my element, as hate is thine;
Ye rend me now: I care not

Second Fury. Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?
Pro. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light. [hy one,

Third Fury. 'Thou think'st we will live thro' thee, one
Like animal life, and tho' we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men ;
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And soul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins,
Crawling like agony.

Pro. Why, ye are thus now ;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

Chorus of Furies.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
Come, come, come !

Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin ; and ye
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And, close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck ;

Come, come, come !

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead ;

Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning :

It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning :

Leave the self-contempt implanted

In young spirits, sense enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel :

Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted,

To the maniac dreamer ; cruel

More than ye can be with hate
Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate.

And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,

But vainly we toil till ye come here.

Ione. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

Pan. These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make
The space between my plumes more black than night

First Fury. Your call was a winged car

Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;

It rapt us from red gulphs of war.

Second Fury. From wide cities, famine wasted;

Third Fury. Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

Fourth Fury. Kingly conclaves stern and cold,

Where blood with gold is bought and sold.

Fifth Fury. From the furnace, white and hot,

In which—

A Fury. Speak not: whisper not;

I know all that ye would tell,

But to speak might break the spell

Which must bend the Invincible,

The stern of thought;

He yet defies the deepest power of Hell

Fury. Tear the veil!

Another Fury. It is torn.

Chorus. The pale stars of the morn

Shine on a misery dire to be borne.

Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.

Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for
man?

Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran

Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,

Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.

One came forth of gentle worth

Smiling on the sanguine earth;

His words outlived him, like swift poison

Withering up truth, peace, and pity

Look! where round the wide horizon

Many a million-peopled city
 Vomits smoke in the bright air.
 Mark that outcry of despair.
 'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
 Wailing for the faith he kindled:
 Look again, the flames almost
 To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
 The survivors round the embers
 Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy!

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
 And the future is dark, and the present is spread
 Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

Semichorus I. Drops of bloody agony flow
 From his white and quivering brow.
 Grant a little respite now:
 See a disenchanted nation
 Springs like day from desolation:
 To truth its state is dedicate,
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate:
 A legioned band of linked brothers
 Whom Love calls children—

Semichorus II.

'Tis another's

See how kindred murder kin:
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within,
 'Till Despair smothers

The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
 [All the FURIES vanish, except one.]

Ione. Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
 Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
 Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

Pan. Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

Ione. What didst thou see?

Pan. A woful sight: a youth
 With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

Ione. What next?

Pan. The heaven around, the earth below,
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

Fury. Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousand-fold torment on themselves and him.

Pro. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O horrible! Thy name I will not speak.
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells:
Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes. [groans;

Fury. Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

Pro. Worse?

Fury. In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man's estate,

And yet they know not that they do not dare.
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
 The powerful goodness want, worse need for th
 The wise want love; and those who love want w
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.

Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
 But live among their suffering fellow-men
 As if none felt: they know not what they do.

Pro. Thy words are like a cloud of winged sn
 And yet I pity those they torture not.

Fury. Thou pitiest them? I speak no more!

Pro. Ah woe!

Ah woe! Alas' pain, pain ever, for ever!
 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
 Thy works within my woe-illumed mind,
 Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
 The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
 I am a God, and cannot find it there,
 Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
 This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
 The sights with which thou torturest gird my so
 With new endurance, till the hour arrives
 When they shall be no types of things which a

Pan. Alas! what sawest thou?

Pro. There are two woes;

To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
 Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words,
 Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
 The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
 As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
 Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
 Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
 Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
 This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

The Earth. I felt thy torture, son, with such
 As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
 I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
 Whose homes are the dim caves of human thou
 And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind

Its world-surrounding ether ! they behold
Beyond that twilight realm as in a glass,
The future ; may they speak comfort to thee !

Pan. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air !

Ione. And see ! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines,
And, hark ! is it the music of the pines ?
Is it the lake ? Is it the waterfall ?

Pan. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

Chorus of Spirits. From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality ;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought :
Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams ;
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene :
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float thro' all above the grave ;
We make these our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloud-like and unpent
Thro' the boundless element :
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee !

Ione. More yet come, one by one : the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

First Spirit. On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,

Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
 There was mingled many a cry—
 Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
 Till they faded thro' the sky;
 And one sound, above, around,
 One sound beneath, around, above,
 Was moving; 'twas the soul of love;
 'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
 Which begins and ends in thee.

Second Spirit. A rainbow's arch stood on the sods
 Which rocked beneath, immoveably:
 And the triumphant storm did flee,
 Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
 Between with many a captive cloud
 A shapeless, dark, and rapid, crowd,
 Each by lightning riven in half:
 I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
 Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
 And spread beneath a hell of death
 O'er the white waters. I alit
 On a great ship lightning-split,
 And speeded hither on the sigh
 Of one who gave an enemy
 His plank, then plunged aside to die

Third Spirit. I sate beside a sage's bed,
 And the lamp was burning red
 Near the book where he had sed,
 When a Dream with plumes of flame
 To his pillow hovering came,
 And I knew it was the same
 Which had kindled long ago
 Pity, eloquence, and woe;
 And the world awhile below
 Wore the shade its lustre made.
 It has borne me here as fleet
 As Desire's lightning feet:
 I must ride it back ere morrow,
 Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

Fourth Spirit. On a poet's lips I slept
 Dreaming like a love-adept

In the sound his breathing kept ;
 Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
 But feeds on the aerial kisses
 Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
 He will watch from dawn to gloom
 The lake-reflected sun illumine
 The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
 Nor heed nor see what things they be ;
 But from these create he can
 Forms more real than living man,
 Nurslings of immortality !
 One of these awakened me,
 And I sped to succour thee.

Ione. Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
 Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,
 Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
 On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere ?
 And, hark ! their sweet sad voices ! 'tis despair
 Mingled with love, and then dissolved in sound.

Panthea. Canst thou speak, sister ? all my words are drowned.

Ione. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
 On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
 Orange and azure deepening into gold :
 Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

Chorus of Spirits. Hast thou beheld the form of Love ?

Fifth Spirit. As over wide dominions [wildernesses,
 I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's
 That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided
 pinions,
 Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses :
 His footsteps paved the world with light ; but as I pass'd
 'twas fading, [madness,
 And hollow Ruin yawned behind : great sages bound in
 And headless patriots and pale youths who perished,
 unupbraiding, [of sadness,
 Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O King

Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollection
gladness.

Sixth Spirit. Ah, sister ! Desolation is a delicate thing
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with silent footstep, and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best
gentlest bear ;

Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes of
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy wing
Dream visions of aerial joy, and call the monster Love
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom
we greet.

Chorus. Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and winged steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and soul and fair,
Like a tempest thro' the air,
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

Pro. Spirits ! how know ye this shall be ?

Chorus. In the atmosphere we breathe,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms fly
From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee.

Ione. Where are the Spirits fled ?

• *Panthea.* Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,

Which thro' the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes thro' long caverns, wind and roll.

Pro. How fair these air-born shapes ! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love ; and thou art far,
Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
All things are still : alas ! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart ;
Tho' I should dream I could even sleep with grief
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulph of things :
There is no agony, and no solace left ;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

Pan. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her ?

Pro. I said all hope was vain but love : thou lovest.

Pan. Deeply in truth ; but the eastern star looks white
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale
The scene of her sad exile : rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine ;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the ether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell !

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus.
ASIA alone.

Asia. From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended
 Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
 Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
 And beating haunts the desolated heart,
 Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended
 Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!
 O child of many winds! As suddenly
 Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
 Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;
 Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
 As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
 The desert of our life.
 This is the season, this the day, the hour;
 At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
 Too long desired, too long delaying, come!
 Now like death-worms the wingless moments crawl
 The point of one white star is quivering still
 Deep in the orange light of widening morn
 Beyond the purple mountains: thro' a chasm
 Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
 Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again
 As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
 Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:
 'Tis lost! and thro' yon peaks of cloudlike snow
 The roseate sun-light quivers: hear I not
 The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
 Winnowing the crimson dawn?

PANTHEA enters.

I feel, I see,
 Those eyes which burn thro' smiles that fade in tears
 Like stars half-quenched in mists of silver dew.
 Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest

The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art ! the sphered sun had climbed
The sea ; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

Pan. Pardon, great Sister ! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds
Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, thro' use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine : erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purpurescens,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
Locked them, as now, behind my dark moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom :
But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which falls beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse ; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet ; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.

Asia. Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.

Pan. As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep.
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy :
" Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
" With loveliness—more fair than aught but her

“ Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.
I lifted them : the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o’er
By love ; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire ; an atmosphere
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I was not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle thro’ my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorb’d, until it past,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed : and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody : thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate : tho’ still
I listened through the night when sound was none.
Ione awakened then, and said to me :
“ Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night ?
“ I always knew what I desired before,
“ Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
“ But now I cannot tell thee what I seek ;
“ I know not ; something sweet, since it is sweet
“ Even to desire ; it is thy sport, false sister :
“ Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
“ Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
“ And mingled it with thine : for when just now
“ We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
“ The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
“ Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
“ Quivered between our intertwining arms.”
I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

Asia. Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air : I feel them not. Oh, lift

Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul :

Pan. I lift them tho' they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express : what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there ?

Asia. Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless
heaven,

Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long fine lashes ; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line thro' line inwoven.

Pan. Why lookest thou as if a spirit past ?

Asia. There is a change : beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape : 'tis He, arrayed
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded morn.
Prometheus, it is thine ! depart not yet !
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build on the waste world ? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us ? Its rude hair
Roughens the wind that lifts it ; its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,
For thro' its grey robe gleams the golden dew
Whose stars the noon has quench'd not.

Dream. Follow ! Follow !

Pan. It is mine other dream.

Asia. It disappears.

Pan. It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost ;
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down ;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief.
OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

Asia. As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among the lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds

Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountain
 Shepherded by the slow unwilling wind;
 And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
 Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;
 And there was more which I remember not;
 But on the shadows of the morning clouds.
 Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
 FOLLOW, OH, FOLLOW! As they vanished by,
 And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had
 The like was stamped, as with a withering fire
 A wind arose among the pines; it shook
 The clinging music from their boughs, and then
 Low, sweet, faint, sounds, like the farewell of ghosts
 Were heard: OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, ME!
 And then I said: "Panthea, look on me."
 But in the depth of those beloved eyes
 Still I saw FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

Echo. Follow, follow!

Pan. The crags, this clear spring morning, mock
 voices

As they were spirit tongued.

Asia. It is some being

Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, listen!

ECHOES, unseen. Echoes we; listen!

We cannot stay:

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away—

Child of Ocean!

Asia. Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
 Of their aerial tongues yet sound.

Pan. I hear.

Echoes. Oh, follow, follow,

As our voice recedeth

Thro' the caverns hollow,

Where the forest spreadeth

(*More distant*) Oh, follow, follow.

Thro' the caverns hollow.

As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Thro' the noon-tide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint
And distant.

Pan. List! the strain floats nearer now.

Echoes. In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By that step alone
Can its rest be broken,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind!

Echoes. Oh, follow, follow!
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noon-tide dew;
By the forests, lakes and fountains,
Thro' the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away

SCENE II.

*A Forest, intermingled with rocks and caverns. ASI.
PANTHEA pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting
on a Rock, listening.*

Semichorus I. of Spirits.

The path thro' which that lonely twain
Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew;
And bends, and then fadessilently,
One frail and fair anemone:
Or when some star, of many a one
That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
Has found the cleft thro' which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon
Ere it is borne away, away.
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:
And the gloom divine is all around,
And underneath is the mossy ground.

Semichorus II. There the voluptuous nightingale
Are awake thro' all the broad noon-day,
When one with bliss or sadness fails,
And thro' the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom;
Another from the swinging blossom,
Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,

Till some new strain of feeling bear
 The song, and all the woods are mute ;
 When there is heard thro' the dim air
 The rush of wings, and rising there
 Like many a lake-surrounding flute,
 Sounds overflow the listener's brain
 So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

Semichorus I. There those enchanted eddies play
 Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
 By Demogorgon's mighty law,
 With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
 All spirits on that secret way :
 As inland boats are driven to Ocean
 Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw :
 And first there comes a gentle sound
 To those in talk or slumber bound,
 And wakes the destined soft emotion,
 Attracts, impels them : those who saw
 Say from the breathing earth behind,
 There steams a plume-uplifting wind
 Which drives them on their path, while they
 Believe their own swift wings and feet
 The sweet desires within obey :
 And so they float upon their way,
 Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
 The storm of sound is driven along.
 Sucked up and hurrying as they fleet
 Behind, its gathering billows meet,
 And to the fatal mountain bear
 Like clouds amid the yielding air.

First Faun. Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
 Which make such delicate music in the woods ?
 We haunt within the least frequented caves
 And closest coverts, and we know these wilds
 Yet never meet them, tho' we hear them oft :
 Where may they hide themselves ?

Second Faun. 'Tis hard to tell :
 I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
 The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
 Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave

The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noon-tide kindles thro' the woven leaves;
And, when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors thro' the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

First Faun. If such live thus, have others other lives
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or on the sunlight of the sphered dew?

Second Faun. Aye, many more which we may wel
divine.

But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus finds his goats undrawn,
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful dooms,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

— 06 —

SCENE III.

*A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains. ASIA and
PANTHEA.*

Pan. Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,

And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift,
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evøe ! Evøe !
The voice which is contagion to the world.

Asia. Fit throne for such a Power ! Magnificent !
How glorious art thou, Earth ! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Tho' evil stain its work, and it should be,
Like its creation, weak, yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth : Wonderful !
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain :
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky.
With azure waves which burst in silver light,
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist ;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark ! the rushing snow !
The sun awakened avalanche ! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

Pan. Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet ! It rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

Asia. The fragments of the clouds are scattered up.

The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair ;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain
Grows dizzy. I see thin shapes within the mist.

Pan. A countenance with beckoning smiles: there
burns

An azure fire within its golden locks !
Another and another: hark ! they speak !

Song of Spirits. To the deep, to the deep,

Down, down !

Through the shade of sleep
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life ;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down !

As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper ;
Death, despair ; love, sorrow ;
Time both : to-day, to-morrow ;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down.

Through the grey void abyss,
Down, down !

Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crag wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone,
Down, down !

In the depth of the deep,
Down, down !

Like veiled lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,

The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his
By that alone.



K

Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more?

Dem. Merciful God.

Asia. And who made terror, madness, crime, re
Which, from the links of the great chain of things
To every thought within the mind of man,
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. Utter his name: a world pining in pain
Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. I feel, I know it: who?

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. Who reigns? There was the Heaven and
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose th
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leave
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And Semivital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love,
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometh
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless, is to reign;
And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease.
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before

Fell ; and the unseasonable seasons drove,
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless pale tribes to mountain caves ;
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death ; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart ;
And he tamed fire, which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man ; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe ;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not : and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song ;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine ;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
We told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars ; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eyes
Gazes not on the interlunar sea :
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs

The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean,
 And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
 Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
 The warm winds, and the azure æther shone,
 And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
 Such, the alleviations of his state,
 Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
 Withering in destined pain ; but who reigns down
 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
 Man looks on his creation like a God
 And sees that it is glorious, drives him on
 The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
 The outcast, the abandoned, the alone ?
 Not Jove : while yet his frown shook heaven, aye when
 His adversary from adamant chains
 Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
 Who is his master ? is he too a slave ?

Dem. All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil :
 Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

Asia. Whom call'dst thou God ?

Dem. I spoke but as ye speak,
 For Jove is the supreme of living things.

Asia. Who is the master of the slave ?

Dem. If the abyss
 Could vomit forth its secrets. But a voice
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless ;
 For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
 On the revolving world ? What to bid speak
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change ? To these
 All things are subject but eternal Love.

Asia. So much I asked before, and my heart gave
 The response thou hast given ; and of such truths
 Each to itself must be the oracle.

One more demand ; and do thou answer me
 As my own soul would answer, did it know
 That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
 Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world :
 When shall the destined hour arrive ?

Dem. Behold ! [night

Asia. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple
 I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds

Which tramples the dim winds : In each there stands
 A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight
 Some look behind, as fiends pursued them. There,
 And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars :
 Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
 With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
 As if the thing they loved fled on before,
 And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
 Stream like a comet's flashing hair : they all
 Sweep onward.

Dem. These are the immortal Hours,
 Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

Asia A spirit with a dreadful countenance
 Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulph.
 Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
 Who art thou ? Whither wouldst thou bear me ? Speak

Spirit. I am the shadow of a destiny
 More dread than is my aspect : ere yon planet
 Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
 Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

Asia. What meanest thou ?

Pan. That terrible shadow floats
 Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
 Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
 Lo ! it ascends the car ; the coursers fly
 Terrified : watch its path among the stars,
 Blackening the night !

Asia. Thus I am answered : strange !

Pan. See, near the verge, another chariot stays ;
 An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
 Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
 Of delicate strange tracery ; the young spirit
 That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope.
 How its soft smiles attract the soul ! as light
 Lures winged insects thro' the lampless air.

Spirit. My coursers are fed with the lightning,
 They drink with the whirlwind's stream,
 And when the red morning is brightening
 They bathe in the fresh sunbeam ;
 They have strength for their swiftness I deem
 They ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
 I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
 Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle,
 We encircle the earth and the moon:
 We shall rest from long labours at noon:
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean

—oo—

SCENE V.

The Car pauses within a cloud on the top of a snowy mountain. ASIA, PANTHEA, and the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

Spirit. On the brink of the night and the morning
 My coursers are wont to respire;
 But the Earth has just whispered a warning
 That their flight must be swifter than fire:
 They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

Asia. Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
 Would give them swifter speed.

Spirit. Alas! it could not.

Pan. O Spirit! pause, and tell me whence is the light
 Which fills the cloud? The sun is yet unrisen.

Spirit. The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
 Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
 Which fills this vapour, as the aerial hue
 Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
 Flows from thy mighty sister.

Pan. Yes, I feel—

Asia. What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.

Pan. How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
 I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
 The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
 Is working in the elements, which suffer
 Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
 • That on the day when the clear hyaline
 Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand
 Within a veined shell, which floated on

Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
 Among the Egean isles, and by the shores
 Which bear thy name, Love, like the atmosphere
 Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
 Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven,
 And the deep ocean, and the sunless caves,
 And all that dwells within them, till grief cast
 Eclipse upon the soul from which it came.
 Such art thou now, nor is it I alone,
 Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
 But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
 Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
 Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
 The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List! [*Music.*]

Asia. Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
 Whose echoes they are: yet love is sweet,
 Given or returned. Common as light is love,
 And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
 Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
 It makes the reptile equal to the God;
 They who inspire it most are fortunate,
 As I am now; but those who feel it most
 Are happier still, after long sufferings,
 As I shall soon become.

Pan. List! Spirits speak.

Voice in the air, singing.

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
 With their love the breath between them;
 And thy smiles before they dwindle
 Make the cold air fire; then screen them
 In those looks, where whoso gazes
 Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy lips are burning
 Thro' the vest which seems to hide them,
 As the radiant lines of morning
 Thro' the clouds ere they divide them;
 And this atmosphere divinest
 Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendor,
And all feel yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

Lamp of earth ! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fall, as I am falling,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

Asia. My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing ;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses !
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean I float down, around,
Into a sea profound of ever spreading sound :
Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions,
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven ;
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But by the instinct of sweet music driven,
Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnacle glided,
The boat of my desire is guided :
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.
We have pass'd Age's icy caves,
And Mau hood' s dark and tossing waves,

And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray;
Beyond the glassy gulphs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee,
Which walk upon the sea, and chaunt melodiously!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

— 0 —
ACT III.

SCENE I.

*Heaven. JUPITER on his Throne; THETIS and the other
Deities assembled.*

Jup. Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me; alone
The soul of man, like an unextinguished fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and
doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up Insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear;
And, tho' my curses thro' the pendulous air,
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it; tho' under my wrath's might
It climb the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet

Dem. Eternity. Demand no direr name,
 Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
 I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child ;
 Mightier than thee : and we must dwell together
 Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightning not.
 The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
 Or re-assume, or hold, succeeding thee :
 Yet if thou wit, as 'tis the destiny
 Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
 Put forth thy might.

Jup. Detested prodigy !
 Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
 I trample thee ! Thou lingerest ?

Mercy ! mercy !
 No pity, no release, no respite ! Oh,
 That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
 Even where he hangs, soared by my long revenge,
 On Caucasus ! He would not doom me thus.
 Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
 The monarch of the world ? What art thou ?
 No refuge ! no appeal !

Sink with me then.
 We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
 Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
 Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
 Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
 Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,
 And whelm on them into the bottomless void
 This desolated world, and thee, and me,
 The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
 Of that for which they combated.

Ai ! Ai !
 The elements obey me not. I sink
 Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down !
 And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
 Darkens my fall with victory ! Ai, Ai !

SCENE II.

The mouth of a great river in the island Atlantis. OCEAN is discovered reclining near the shore ; APOLLO stands beside him.

Ocean. He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown ?

Apollo. Aye, when the strife was ended which made dim

The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell :
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

Ocean. He sunk to the abyss ? to the dark void ?

Apollo. An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aerial ice clings over it.

Ocean. Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea,
Which are my realm, will heave, unstain'd with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn
Swayed by the summer air ; my streams will flow
Round many-peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles ; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea ;
Tracking their path no more by blood, and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice
Of slavery and command ; but by the light

Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle, voices,
That sweetest music such as spirits love.

Apollo. And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide. But list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits on the morning star.

Ocean. Thou must away!
Thy steeds will pause at even, till then farewell:
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne,
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pled and starry sea-flower crowns,
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

(*A sound of waves is heard.*)

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster! I come now. Farewell.

Apollo

Farewell.

—00—

SCENE III.

Caucasus. PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, the EARTH,
SPIRITS, ASIA, and PANTHEA, borne in the car with
the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

HERCULES unbinds PROMETHEUS, who descends.

Hercules. Most glorious among spirits, thus doth
strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

Pro. Thy gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld ; and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, thro' your love and care ;
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light :
And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees : and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass,—
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own ;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability ?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile ; and thou,
Ione, shall chaunt fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed,
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence ;
And we will search, with looks and words of love
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits ; and, like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be ;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower aerial Enna feeds,

At their known island-homes in Himera,
 'The echoes of the human world, which tell
 Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
 And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
 Itself the echo of the heart, and all
 That tempers or improves man's life, now free ;
 And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
 Then radiant as the mind, arising bright
 From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
 Of which these are the phantoms, cast on them
 The gathered rays which are reality,
 Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
 Of Painting, Sculpture, and wrapt Poesy,
 And Arts, tho' unimagined, yet to be
 The wandering voices and the shadows these
 Of all that man becomes, the mediators
 Of that best worship love, by him and us
 Given and returned ; swift shapes and sounds which
 grow
 More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
 And, veil by veil, evil and error fall :
 Such virtue as the cave and place around.

(Turning to the Spirit of the Hour.)

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
 Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old
 Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
 A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
 Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

Ione. Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
 Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell.
 See the pale azure fading into silver
 Lining it with a soft yet glowing light :
 Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there ?

Spirit. It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean :
 Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

Pro. Go, borne over the cities of mankind
 On whirlwind-footed coursers ; once again
 Outspeed the sun around the orb'd world ;
 And, as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
 Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,
 Loosening its mighty music ; it shall be

As thunder mingled with clear echoes : then
Return, and thou shalt dwell beside our cave,—
And thou, O Mother Earth!—

The Earth. I hear, I feel;
Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves. 'Tis life, 'tis joy,
And, thro' my withered, old, and icy frame,
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair
Folded in my sustaining arms : all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
Draining the poison of despair ; shall take
And interchange sweet nutriment. To me
Shall they become like sister-antelopes
By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
Under the stars like balm : night-folded flowers
Shall suck unwitting hues in their repose :
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy ;
And death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother,
Folding her child, says, " Leave me not again."
Asia. O mother ! wherefore speak the name of death ?
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
Who die ?

The Earth. It would avail not to reply.
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
But to the uncommunicating dead.
Death is the veil which those who live call life :
They sleep, and it is lifted : and meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild,
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night.
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,

Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even
 The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,
 With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.—
 And thou ! There is a cavern where my spirit
 Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
 Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
 Became mad too, and built a temple there,
 And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
 The erring nations round to mutual war,
 And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee ;
 Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
 A violet's exhalation, and it fills
 With a serener light and crimson air,
 Intense yet soft, the rocks and woods around ;
 It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
 And the dark-linked ivy tangling wild,
 And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
 Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
 As the rain through them, and bright golden globes
 Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,
 And thro' their veined leaves and amber stems
 The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
 Stand ever mantling with ærial dew,
 The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
 Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
 Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
 Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
 Arise ! Appear !

[A Spirit rises in the likeness of a winged child

This is my torch-bearer,
 Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
 On eyes from which he kindled it anew
 With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
 For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward
 And guide this company beyond the peak
 Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
 And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
 Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
 With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
 And up the green ravine, across the vale,
 Beside the windless and crystalline pool,

Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
 The image of a temple, built above,
 Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
 And palm-like capital, and over-wrought
 And populous most with living imagery,
 Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
 Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
 It is deserted now, but once it bore
 Thy name, Prometheus. There the emulous youths
 Bore to thy honour thro' the divine gloom
 The lamp which was thine emblem: even as those
 Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
 Into the grave, across the night of life,
 As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
 To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
 Beside that temple is the destined cave.

—oo—

SCENE IV.

A forest. In the back ground a Cave. PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, and the SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

Ione. Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
 Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
 A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
 Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
 The splendor drops in flakes upon the grass!
 Knowest thou it?

Pan. It is the delicate spirit
 That guides the earth thro' heaven. From afar
 The populous constellations call that light
 The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
 It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
 Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
 Or walks thro' fields or cities while men sleep,
 Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,

Or thro' the green waste wilderness, as now,
 Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
 It loved our sister Asia, and it came
 Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
 Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
 As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
 It made its childish confidence, and told her
 All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
 Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and calied her,
 From whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,
 Mother, dear mother.

The Spirit of the Earth, (running to Asia.)

Mother, dearest mother,

May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
 May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
 After thy looks have made them tired of joy;
 May I then play beside thee the long noons,
 When work is none in the bright silent air?

Asia. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth
 Can cherish thee unenvied. Speak, I pray:
 Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

Spirit of the Earth. Mother, I am grown wiser, though
 a child

Cannot be wise like thee, within this day,
 And happier too; happier and wiser both.
 Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms
 And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
 That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
 A hindrance to my walks o'er the green world;
 And that, among the haunts of humankind,
 Hard-featured men, or with proud angry looks,
 Or cold staid gait, or false and holiow smiles,
 Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
 Or such other foul masks, with which ill thoughts
 Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
 And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
 (Tho' fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
 When good and kind, free and sincere, like thee,)
 When false or frowning made me sick at heart
 To pass them, tho' they slept, and I unseen.
 Well, my path lately lay thro' a great city

Into the woody hills surrounding it :
 A sentinel was sleeping at the gate :
 When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
 The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
 Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all,—
 A long, long sound, as it would never end :
 And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
 Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
 Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
 The music pealed along. I hid myself
 Within a fountain in the public square,
 Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
 Seen in a wave under green leaves, and soon
 Those ugly human shapes and visages,
 Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
 Pass'd floating through the air, and fading still
 Into the winds that scattered them ; and those
 From whom they pass'd seemed mild and lovely forms
 After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
 Were somewhat changed ; and, after brief surprise
 And greetings of delighted wonder, all
 Went to their sleep again : and when the dawn
 Came, would'st thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,
 Could e'er be beautiful ? yet so they were,
 And that with little change of shape or hue :
 All things had put their evil nature off.—
 I cannot tell my joy, when, o'er a lake
 Upon a drooping bough with night-shade twined,
 I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
 And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
 With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
 Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky :
 So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
 We meet again, the happiest change of all.

Asia. And never will we part, till thy chaste sister,
 Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon,
 Will look on thy more warm and equal light
 Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow,
 And love thee—

Spirit of the Earth. What ! as Asia loves Prometheus ?

Asia. Peace, wanton ! thou art yet not old enough.

Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
 To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
 With sphered fires the interlunar air ?

Spirit of the Earth. Nay, mother, while my sister trims
 her lamp

'Tis hard I should go darkling.

A. α. Listen ; look !

The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters.

Pro. We feel what thou hast heard and seen : yet speak.

Spirit of the Hour. Soon as the sound had ceased
 whose thunder filled

The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
 There was a change : the impalpable thin air
 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
 As if the sense of love dissolved in them
 Had folded itself round the sphered world.
 My vision then grew clear, and I could see
 Into the mysteries of the universe.
 Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
 Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
 My coursers sought their birth-place in the sun,
 Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,
 Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire ;
 And where my moonlight car will stand within
 A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
 Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
 And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,
 In memory of the tidings it has borne ;
 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
 Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
 And open to the bright and liquid sky.
 Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake,
 The likeness of those winged steeds will mock
 The light from which they find repose. Alas,
 Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
 When all remains untold which ye would hear ?
 As I have said I floated to the earth :
 It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
 To move, to breathe, to be. . I wandering went

Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things ; but soon I looked,
And, behold ! thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do ;
None fawned, none trampled ; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
" All hope abandon ye who enter here ;"
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak ;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill ;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk,
Which makes the heart deny the yes it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women too, frank, beautiful, and kind,
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, pass'd ; gentle radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure ;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven ; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoil the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons, wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes

Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors; mouldering round
Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,
A dark, yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity.
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
Which, under many a name and many a form,
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines;
The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remain
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Except from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself, just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless; nor yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, tho' ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT IV.

*Scene, a part of the forest near the Cave of PROMETHEUS.
PANTHEA and IONE are sleeping ; they awake gradually
during the first Song.*

Voice of unseen Spirits.

The pale stars are gone !
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hasten, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye ?

*A train of dark forms and shadows passes by confusedly,
singing.*

Here, oh, here !
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancelled year !
Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.
Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew !
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew !
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours !
Haste, oh, haste !
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste,
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,

With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony !

Ione. What dark forms were they ?

Pan. The past Hours, weak and grey
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

Ione. Have they pass'd ?

Pan. They have pass'd ;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled.

Ione. Whither, oh, whither ?

Pan. To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

Voice of unseen Spirits.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee !
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye ?

The pine-boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea :
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness,
But where are ye ?

Ione. What charioteers are these ?

Pan. Where are their chariots ?

Semichorus of Hours.

The voices of the Spirits of Air and Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep

A voice. In the deep ?

Semichorus II. Oh, below the deep.

Semichorus I. A hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept
Found the truth.

Semichorus II. Worse than his visions were !

Semichorus I. We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep ;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power and leap—

Semichorus II. As the billows leap in the morning
beams !

Chorus. Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light ;
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A voice. Unite !

Pan. See, where the Spirits of the human mind,
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils approach.

Chorus of Spirits. We join the throng,
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along ;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

Chorus of Hours. Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not ?

Chorus of Spirits. We come from the mind
Of human kind,
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind :
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses ;
From the azure isles
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her syren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy ;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood and tearr,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears ;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandall'd with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a reign of balm
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

Chorus of Spirits and Hours.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure ;
 From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth
 Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
 Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
 As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
 To an ocean of splendour and harmony !

Chorus of Spirits. Our spoil is won,
 Our task is done,
 We are free to dive, or soar, or run :
 Beyond and around,
 Or within the bound
 Which clips the world with darkness round

We'll pass the eyes
 Of the starry skies
 Into the hoar deep to colonize :
 Death, Chaos, and Night,
 From the sound of our flight,
 Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
 And the Spirit of Might,
 Which drives round the stars in the fiery flight ;
 And Love, Thought, and Breath,
 The powers that quell Death,
 Wherever we soar, shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
 In the void's loose field
 A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield ;
 We will take our plan
 From the new world of man,
 And our work shall be called the Promethean.

Chorus of Hours. Break the dance, and scatter the
 song ;

Let some depart, and some remain.

Semichorus I. We, beyond heaven, are driven along :

Semichorus II. Us the enchantments of earth retain :

Semichorus I. Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

Semichorus II. Solemn, and slow, and serene, and
bright,

Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,

With the powers of a world of perfect light.

Semichorus I. We whirl, singing loud, round the
gathering sphere,

Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds, appear

From its chaos, made calm by love, not fear.

Semichorus II. We encircle the ocean and mountains
of earth,

And the happy forms of its death and birth

Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

Chorus of Hours and Spirits.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,

Let some depart and some remain;

Wherever we fly we lead along

In leashes, like star-beams, soft yet strong,

The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

Pan. Ha! they are gone!

Ione. Yet feel you no delight

From the past sweetness?

Pan. As the hare green hill,

When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,

Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water

To the unpavilioned sky!

Ione. Even whilst we speak

New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

Pan. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world

Kindling within the strings of the waved air

Eolian modulations.

Ione. Listen too,

How every pause is filled with under-notes,

Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones,

Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,

As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air,

And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

Pan. But see where through two openings in the forest,

Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts ;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet,
Under the ground and through the windless air.

Ione. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the mother of the months is borne
By ebbing night into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,
O'er which is curved an orb-like canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass ;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunder storm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it ; they roll,
And move, and grow, as with an inward wind,
Within it sits a winged infant : white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow ;
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost ;
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in string ; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jagged clouds out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around
With fire that is not brightness ; in its hand
It sways a quivering moon-beam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow

Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll,
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

Pan. And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is, as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, green and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream, dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly, roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one ærial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream

Ione. 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

Pan. And from a star upon its forehead shoot,
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now

vast beams like smoke of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart ;
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,
Valuless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poured
With vegetable silver overspread ;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles ; anchors, beaks of ships ;
Planks turned to marble : quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin !
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human ; see, they lie
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes, and fanes : prodigious shapes,
Huddled in grey annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard black deep ; and over these
The anatomies of unknown winged things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags ; and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe

Wrapt deluge round it like a cloak and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished : or some God,
Whose throne was in a comet, pass'd, and cried,
Be not ! And like my words they were no more.

The Earth. The joy, the triumph, the delight, the
madness !

The boundless, overflowing, bursting, gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined !

Ha ! ha ! the animation of delight

Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

The Moon. Brother mine, calm wanderer,

Happy globe of land and air,

Some spirit is darted like a beam from thee,

Which penetrates my frozen frame,

And passes with the warmth of flame,

With love, and odour, and deep melody,

Through me, through me !

The Earth. Ha ! ha ! the caverns of my hollow
mountains,

My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,

Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.

The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,

And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,

Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do : Sceptred curse,

Who all our green and azure universe

Threatenest to muffle round with black destruction
sending

A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,

And splinter and knead down my children's bones,

All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,

Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,

My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow
and fire,

My sea like forests, every blade and blossom

Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,

Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
 By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
 Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all !
 And from beneath, around, within, above,
 Filling thy void annihilation, love
 Bursts in like light on caves cloven by thunder-ball.

The Moon. The snow upon my lifeless mountains
 Is loosened into living fountains,
 My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :
 A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
 It clothes with unexpected birth
 My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine
 On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel, I know [grow,
 Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers
 And living shapes upon my bosom move :
 Music is in the sea and air,
 Winged clouds soar here and there,
 Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :
 'Tis love, all love !

The Earth. It interpenetrates my granite mass,
 Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass
 Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;
 Upon the winds, among the clouds, 'tis spread,
 It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
 They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers ;
 And like a storm bursting its cloudly prison
 With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
 Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being :
 With earthquake shock and swiftmess, making shiver
 Thought's stagnant chaos, unreinforced for ever.
 Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows,
 fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
 Which could distort to many a shape of error
 This true fair world of things, a sea-reflecting love :
 Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven
 Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,
 Darting from starry depths radiance and light, doth
 move :

Leave man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is
poured ;
Then, when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamant stress ;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wil-
derness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine controul,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea :
/ Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none new how gentle they could
be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not over-
whelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold
mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass ;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their
children wear ;
Language is a perpetual orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shape-
less were.

The lightning is his slave ; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on !
The tempest is his steed ; he strides the air,
And the abyss shouts, from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me ; I have
none.

The Moon. The shadow of white death has pass'd
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;
And through my newly-woven bowers
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

The Earth. As the dissolving warmth of dawn may
fold
A half-frozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

The Moon. Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine ;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power,
Which doth array thy sphere ; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine !

The Earth. I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the sadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth
keep.

The Moon. As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull,
So, when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee

Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full !
Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one ;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given ;
I, thy crystal paramour,
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes ;
I, a most enamour'd maiden,
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side,
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the wierd Cadmæan forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or cameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a grey and watery mist
Glowes like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.

The Earth. And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.

O gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight

Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
 Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night
 Through isles for ever calm;
 O gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
 The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
 Charming the tiger joy, whose trappings fierce
 Made wounds which need thy balm.

Pan. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
 A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
 Out of the stream of sound.

Ione. Ah me! sweet sister,
 The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
 And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
 Because your words fall like the clear soft dew
 Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

Pan. Peace! peace! A mighty Power which is as
 darkness,
 Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
 Is showered like night. and from within the air
 Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
 Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
 Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
 Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

Ione. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

Pan. An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

Dem. Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul!

Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
 Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll

The love which paves thy path along the skies:

The Earth. I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

Dem. Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
 With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;

Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
 Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

The Moon. I hear: I am a loaf shaken by thee!

Dem. Ye kings of suns and stars! Dæmons and Gods,
 Ætherial Domination! who possess
 Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
 Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A Voice from above.

Our great Republic hears; we are blest, and bless,

Dem. Ye happy dead ! whose beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to pourtray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—

A Voice from beneath. Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

Dem. Ye elemental Genli, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen Lead ; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on ;

A confused Voice.

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

Dem. Spirits ! whose homes are flesh : ye beasts, and
birds,

Ye worms and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;
Lightning and wind ; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes :

A Voice. Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

Dem. Man, who wert once a despot and a slave ;

A dupe and a deceiver: a decay ;

A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

All. Speak ! thy strong words may never pass away.

Dem. This is the day, which down the void abyss
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour

Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance

Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength ;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,

Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length,
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ;
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;
 To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;
 Neither to change, nor flatter, nor repent ;
 This, like thy glory, Titan ! is to be
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory !

END OF PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.



ROSALIND AND HELEN ;

A MODERN ECLOGUE.

ROSALIND, HELEN, and her CHILD.

SCENE—*The Shore of the Lake of Como.*

Helen. Come hither, my sweet Rosalind,
 'Tis long since thou and I have met ;
 And yet methinks it were unkind
 Those moments to forget.
 Come sit by me. I see thee stand
 By this lone lake, in this far land,
 Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,
 Thy sweet voice to each tone of even
 United, and thine eyes replying
 To the hues of yon fair heaven.
 Come, gentle friend : wilt sit by me ?
 And be as thou wert wont to be
 Ere we were disunited ?
 None doth behold us now : the power

That led us forth at this lone hour
Will be but ill requited
If thou depart in scorn : oh ! come,
And talk of our abandoned home.
Remember, this is Italy,
And we are exiles. Talk with me
Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,
Barren and dark although they be,
Were dearer than these chesnut woods :
Those heathy paths, that inland stream,
And the blue mountains, shapes which seem
Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream :
Which that we have abandoned now,
Weighs on the heart like that remorse
Which altered friendship leaves. I seek
No more our youthful intercourse.
That cannot be ! Rosalind, speak,
Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come,
When evening fell upon our common home,
When for one hour we parted,—do not frown :
I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken :
But turn to me. Oh ! by this cherished token,
Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,
Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,
And not my scorned self who prayed to thee.

Rosalind. Is it a dream, or do I see
And hear, frail Helen ? I would flee
Thy taunting touch ; but former years
Arise, and bring forbidden tears ;
And my o'erburthened memory
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee.
I share thy crime. I cannot choose
But weep for thee : mine own strange grief
But seldom stoops to such relief :
Nor ever did I love thee less,
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness
Even with a sister's woe. I knew
What to the evil world is due,
And therefore sternly did refuse
To link me with the infamy

Of one so lost as Helen. Now,
Bewildered by my dire despair,
Wondering I blush, and weep that thou
Should'st love me still,—thou only!—There,
Let us sit on that grey stone,
Till our mournful talk be done.

Helen. Alas ! not there ; I cannot bear
The murmur of this lake to hear.
A sound from thee, Rosalind dear,
Which never yet I heard elsewhere
But in our native land, recurs,
Even here where now we meet. It stirs
Too much of suffocating sorrow !
In the dell of yon dark chesnut wood
Is a stone seat, a solitude
Less like our own. The ghost of peace
Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,
If thy kind feelings should not cease,
We may sit here.

Rosalind. Thou lead, my sweet,
And I will follow.

Henry. 'Tis Finici's seat
Where you are going. This is not the way.
Mamma ; it leads behind those trees that grow
Close to the little river.

Helen. Yes—I know—
I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be gay,
Dear boy—why do you sob ?

Henry. I do not know—
But it might break any one's heart to see
You and the lady cry so bitterly.

Helen. It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.
We only cried with joy to see each other :
We are quite merry now : Good night.

The boy

Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,
And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy
Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,
And whispered in her ear, "Bring home with you
That sweet strange lady-friend." Then off he flew
But stopt, and beckoned with a meaning smile,
Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way
Beneath the forest's solitude,
It was a vast and antique wood,
Thro' which they took their way ;
And the grey shades of evening
O'er that green wilderness did fling
Still deeper solitude.
Pursuing still the path that wound
The vast and knotted trees around
Thro' which slow shades were wandering,
To a deep lawny dell they came,
To a stone seat beside a spring,
O'er which the columned wood did frame
A roofless temple, like the fane
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,
Man's early race once knelt beneath
The overhanging deity.
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,
The pale snake, that with eager breath
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood
In the light of his own loveliness ;
And the birds that in the fountain dip
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship
Above and round him wheel and hover.
The fitful wind is heard to stir
One solitary leaf on high :

The chirping of the grasshopper
Fills ever pause. There is emotion
In all that dwells at noontide here :
Then, thro' the intricate wild wood,
A maze of life and light and motion
Is woven. But there is stillness now ;
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now ;
The snake is in his cave asleep ;
The birds are on the branches dreaming ;
Only the shadows creep ;
Only the glow-worm is gleaming ;
Only the owls and the nightingales
Wake in this dell when day-light fails,
And grey shades gather in the woods ;
And the owls have all fled far away
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.
The accustomed nightingale still broods
On her accustomed bough,
But she is mute ; for her false mate
Has fled and left her desolate.

This silent spot tradition old
Had peopled with the spectral dead.
For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold
And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told
That a hellish shape at midnight led
The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,
And sate on the seat beside him there,
Till a naked child came wandering by,
When the fiend would change to a lady fair !
A fearful tale ! The truth was worse ;
For here a sister and a brother
Had solemnized a monstrous curse,
Meeting in this fair solitude ;
For beneath yon very sky,
Had they resigned to one another
Body and soul. The multitude,
Tracking them to the secret wood,
Tore limb from limb their innocent child,
And stabbed and trampled on its mother •

But the youth, for God's most holy grace,
A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came
To this lone silent spot,
From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow
So much of sympathy to borrow
As soothed her own dark lot.
Duly each evening from her home,
With her fair child would Helen come
To sit upon that antique seat,
While the hues of day were pale;
And the bright boy beside her feet
Now lay, lifting at intervals
His broad blue eyes upon her;
Now, where some sudden impulse calls,
Following. He was a gentle boy,
And in all gentle sports took joy;
Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,
With a small feather for a sail,
His fancy on that spring would float,
If some invisible breeze might stir
Its marble calm: and Helen smiled
Thro' tears of awe on the gay child,
To think that a boy as fair as he,
In years which never more may be,
By that same fount, in that same wood,
The like sweet fancies had pursued;
And that a mother, lost like her,
Had mournfully sate watching him.
Then all the scene was wont to swim
Thro' the mist of a burning tear.

For many months had Helen known
This scene: and now she thither turned
Her footsteps, not alone.
The friend, whose falsehood she had mourned,
Sate with her on that seat of stone.
Silent they sate; for evening,
And the power its glimpses bring,
Had, with one awful shadow, quelled
The passion of their grief. They sate

With linked hands, for unrepelle
Had Helen taken Rosalind's.
Like the autumn wind, when it abinds
The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,
Which is twined in the sultry summer air
Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre,
Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,
And the sound of her heart that ever beat,
As with sighs and words she breathed on her,
Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,
Till her thoughts were free to float and flow ;
And from her labouring bosom now,
Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,
The voice of a long pent sorrow came.

Rosalind. I saw the dark earth fall upon
The coffin ; and I saw the stone
Laid over him whom this cold breast
Had pillowed to his nightly rest !
Thou knowest not, thou can'st not know
My agony. Oh ! I could not weep :
The sources whence such blessings flow
Were not to be approached by me !
But I could smile, and I could sleep,
Though with a self-accusing heart.
In morning's light, and evening's gloom,
I watched,—and would not thence depart—
My husband's unlamented tomb.
My children knew their sire was gone,
But when I told them, ' he is dead,'—
They laughed aloud in frantic glee,
They clapped their hands and leaped about
Answering each other's ecstasy
With many a prank and merry shout ;
But I sat silent and alone,
Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed

They laughed, for he was dead ; but I
Sate with a hard and tearless eye,
And with a heart which would deny
The secret joy it could not quell,

Low muttering o'er his loathed name.
Till from that self-contention came
Remorse where sin was none; a hell
Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man
Hard, selfish, loving only gold,
Yet full of guile: his pale eyes ran
With tears, which each some falsehood told,
And oft his smooth and bridled tongue
Would give the lie to his flushing cheek:
He was a coward to the strong:
He was a tyrant to the weak,
On whom his vengeance he would wreak:
For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,
From many a stranger's eye would dart,
And on his memory cling, and follow
His soul to it's home so cold and hollow
He was a tyrant to the weak,
And we were such, alas the day!
Oft, when my little ones at play,
Were in youth's natural lightness gay,
Or if they listened to some tale
Of travellers, or of fairy land,—
When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand
Flashed on their faces,—if they heard
Or thought they heard upon the stair
His footstep, the suspended word
Died on my lips! we all grew pale:
The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear
If it thought it heard its father near;
And my two wild boys would near my knee
Cling, cowed, and cowering fearfully.

I'll tell thee truth. I loved another.
His name in my ear was ever ringing,
His form to my brain was ever clinging;
Yet if some stranger breathed that name,
My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast:
My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,
My days were dim in the shadow cast,
By the memory of the same!

Day and night, day and night,
He was my breath and life and light,
For three short years, which soon were past:
On the fourth, my gentle mother
Led me to the shrine to be
His sworn bride eternally.
And now we stood on the altar stair,
When my father came from a distant land,
And with a loud and fearful cry
Rushed between us suddenly.
I saw the stream of his thin grey hair,
I saw his lean and lifted hand,
And heard his words,—and live! O God!
Wherefore do I live?—‘Hold, hold!’
He cried,—‘I tell thee ’tis her brother!
Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod
Of yon church-yard rests in her shroud so cold;
I am now weak, and pale, and old;
We were once dear to one another,
I and that corpse! Thou art our child!’
Then with a laugh both long and wild
The youth upon the pavement fell;
They found him dead! All looked on me,
The spasms of my despair to see;
But I was calm. I went away;
I was clammy-cold like clay!
I did not weep; I did not speak;
But day by day, week after week,
I walked about like a corpse alive!
Alas, sweet friend, you must believe
This heart is stone: it did not break.

My father lived a little while,
But all might see that he was dying,
He smiled with such a woful smile!
When he was in the church-yard lying
Among the worms, we grew quite poor,
So that no one would give us bread;
My mother looked at me, and said
Faint words of cheer, which only meant
That she could die and be content;

So I went forth from the same church door
To another husband's bed.
And this was he who died at last,
When weeks, and months, and years had past,
Through which I firmly did fulfil
My duties, a devoted wife,
With the stern step of vanquished will,
Walking beneath the night of life,
Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain
Falling for ever, pain, by pain,
The very hope of death's dear rest ;
Which, since the heart within my breast
Of natural life was dispossessed,
Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green
Upon my mother's grave,—that mother
Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make
My wan eyes glitter for her sake,
Was my vowed task, the single care
Which once gave life to my despair,—
When she was a thing that did not stir,
And the crawling worms were cradling her
To a sleep more deep, and so more sweet
Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,
I lived : a living pulse then beat
Beneath my heart that awakened me.
What was this pulse so warm and free ?
Alas ! I knew it could not be
My own dull blood : 'twas like a thought
Of liquid love, that spread and wrought
Under my bosom and in my brain,
And crept with the blood through every vein ;
And hour by hour, day after day,
The wonder could not charm away,
But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,
Until I knew it was a child,
And then I wept. For long, long years
These frozen eyes had shed no tears :
But now—'twas the season fair and mild

When April has wept itself to May ;
I sate through the sweet sunny day
By my window bowered round with leaves,
And down my cheeks the quick tears ran
Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,
When warm spring showers are passing o'er:
O Helen, none can ever tell
The joy it was to weep once more !

I wept to think how hard it were
To kill my babe, and take from it
The sense of light, and the warm air,
And my own fond and tender care,
And love, and smiles ; ere I knew yet
That these for it might, as for me,
Be the masks of a grinning mockery.
And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet
To feed it from my faded breast,
Or mark my own heart's restless beat
Rock it to its untroubled rest,
And watch the growing soul beneath
Dawn in faint smiles ; and hear its breath,
Half interrupted by calm sighs,
And search the depth of its fair eyes
For long departed memories !
And so I lived till that sweet load
Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed
The stream of years, and on it bore
Two shapes of gladness to my sight ;
Two other babes, delightful more
In my lost soul's abandoned night,
Than their own country ships may be
Sailing towards wrecked mariners,
Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea.
For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay
Sucking the sullen milk away
About my frozen heart, did play,
And weaned it, oh how painfully !
As they themselves were weaned each one

From that sweet food,—even from the thirst
Of death, and nothingness, and rest,

Strange inmate of a living breast:
Which all that I had undergone
Of grief and shame, since she, who first
The gates of that dark refuge closed,
Came to my sight, and almost burst
The seal of that Lethean spring;
But these fair shadows interposed:
For all delights are shadows now!
And from my brain to my dull brow
The heavy tears gather and flow;
I cannot speak: Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes
Glimmered among the moonlight dew:
Her deep hard sobs, and heavy sighs,
Their echoes in the darkness threw.
When she grew calm, she thus did keep
The tenor of her tale:

He died:

I know not how: he was not old,
If age be numbered by its years:
But he was bowed and bent with fears,
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,
Which, like fierce fever left him weak;
And his strait lip and bloated cheek
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers;
And selfish cares with barren plough,
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed
Upon the withering life within,
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.
Whether his ill were death or sin
None knew, until he died indeed,
And then men owned they were the same.

Seven days within my chamber lay
That corse, and my babes made 'oliday
At last, I told them what is death;
The eldest, with a kind of shame,

Came to my knees with silent breath,
And sate awe-stricken at my feet :
And soon the others left their play.
And sate there too. It is unmeet
To shed on the brief flower of youth
The withering knowledge of the grave :
From me remorse then wrung that truth.
I could not bear the joy which gave
Too just a response to mine own,
In vain. I dared not feign a groan ;
And in their artless looks I saw,
Between the mists of fear and awe,
That my own thought was theirs ; and they
Expressed it not in words, but said,
Each in its heart, how every day
Will pass in happy work and play,
Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin
Assembled, and the will was read.
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead
Have strength, their putrid shrouds within.
To blast and torture. Those who live
Still fear the living, but a corse
Is merciless, and power doth give
To such pale tyrants half the spoil
He rends from those who groan and toil,
Because they blush not with remorse
Among their crawling worms. Behold,
I have no child ! my tale grows old
With grief, and daggers : let it reach
The limits of my feeble speech,
And languidly at length recline
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty
Among the fallen on evil days ;
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,
And houseless Want in frozen years
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,
And, worse than all, that inward stain

Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers
 Youth's star-light smile, and makes it, tears
 First like hot gall, then dry for ever !
 And well thou knowest a mother never
 Could doom her children to this ill,
 And well he knew the same. 'Tis will
 Imported, that if e'er again
 I sought my children to behold,
 Or in my birth-place did remain
 Beyond three days, whose hours were told,
 They should inherit nought: and he,
 To whom next came their patrimony,
 A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,
 Aye watched me, as the will was read,
 With eyes askance, which sought to see
 The secrets of my agony ;
 And with close lips and anxious brow
 Stood canvassing still to and fro
 The chance of my resolve, and all
 The dead man's caution just did call ;
 For in that killing lie 'twas said—
 " She is adulterous, and doth hold
 In secret that the Christian creed
 Is false, and therefore is much need
 That I should have a care to save
 My children from eternal fire."
 Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,
 And therefore dared to be a liar !
 In truth, the Indian on the pyre
 Of her dead husband, half consumed,
 As well might there be false, as I
 To those abhorred embraces doomed,
 Far worse than fire's brief agony.
 As to the Christian creed, if true
 Or false, I never questioned it ;
 I took it as the vulgar do :
 Nor my vexed soul had leisure yet
 To doubt the things men say, or deem
 That they are other than they seem.

All present who those crimes did hear,
 In feigned or actual scorn and fear,

Men, women, children, slunk away
 Whispering with self-contented pride
 Which half suspects its own base lie
 I spoke to none, nor did abide,
 But silently I went my way,
 Nor noticed I, where joyously
 Sate my two younger babes at play,
 In the court-yard through which I past;
 But went with footsteps firm and fast
 Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,
 And there, a woman with grey hairs,
 Who had my mother's servant been,
 Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,
 Made me accept a purse of gold,
 Half of the earnings she had kept
 To refuge her when weak and old.

With woe, which never sleeps or slept
 I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought
 But on yon alp, whose snowy head
 'Mid the azure air is islanded,
 (We see it o'er the flood of cloud,
 Which sunrise from its eastern caves
 Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,
 Hung with its precipices proud,
 From that grey stone where first we met)
 There, now who knows the dead feel nought?
 Should be my grave; for he who yet
 Is my soul's soul, once said: "'Twere sweet
 'Mid stars and lightnings to abide;
 And winds and lulling snows, that beat
 With their soft flakes the mountain wide,
 When weary meteor lamps repose,
 And languid storms their pinions close:
 And all things strong and bright and pure,
 And ever during, aye endure:
 Who knows, if one were buried there,
 But these things might our spirits make,
 Amid the all-surrounding air,
 Their own eternity partake?"
 Then't was a wild and playful saying
 At which I laughed & seemed to laugh;

They were his words: now heed my praying,
 And let them be my epitaph.
 Thy memory for a term may be
 My monument. Wilt remember me?
 I know thou wilt, and canst forgive
 Whilst in this erring world to live
 My soul disdained not, that I thought
 Its lying forms were worthy aught
 And much less thee.

Helen. Oh speak not so,
 But come to me and pour thy woe
 Into this heart, full though it be,
 Aye overflowing with its own;
 I thought that grief had severed me
 From all beside who weep and groan;
 Its likeness upon earth to be,
 Its express image; but thou art
 More wretched. Sweet! we will not part
 Henceforth, if death be not division;
 If so, the dead feel no contrition.
 But wilt thou hear since last we parted
 All that has left me broken hearted?

Ros. Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn
 Of their thin beams by that delusive morn
 Which sinks again in darkness, like the light
 Of early love, soon lost in total night.

Helen. Alas! Italian winds are mild,
 But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—
 When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,
 Soft music, my poor brain is wild,
 And I am weak like a nursing child,
 Though my soul with grief is grey and old.

Ros. Weep not at thine own words, tho' they must
 make
 Me weep. What is thy tale?

Helen. I fear 'twill shake
 Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well
 Rememberest when we met no more

And, though I dwelt with Lionel,
That friendless caution pierced me sore
With grief; a wound my spirit bore
Indignantly, but when he died
With him lay dead both hope and pride.

Alas! all hope is buried now.
But then men dreamed the aged earth
Was labouring in that mighty birth,
Which many a poet and a sage
Has aye foreseen—the happy age
When truth and love shall dwell below
Among the works and ways of men;
Which on this world not power, but will,
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befel
Of strife, how vain, is known too well;
When liberty's dear pæan fell
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,
Though of great wealth and lineage high,
Yet through those dungeon walls there came
Thy thrilling light, O liberty!
And as the meteor's midnight flame
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth
Flashed on his visionary youth,
And filled him, not with love, but faith,
And hope, and courage mute in death;
For love and life in him were twins,
Born at one birth: in every other.
First life, then love its course begins,
Though they be children of one mother;
And so through this dark world they fleet
Divided, till in death they meet:
But he loved all things ever. Then
He past amid the strife of men,
And stood at the throne of armed power
Pleading for a world of woe:
Secure as one on a rock-built tower
O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro.
'Mid the passions wild of human kind
He stood, like a spirit calming them;
For, it was said, his words could bind

Like music the lulled crowd, and stem
That torrent of unquiet dream
Which mortals truth and reason deem,
But is revenge and fear and pride.
Joyous he was ; and hope and peace
On all who heard him did abide,
Raining like dew from his sweet talk,
As where the evening star may walk
Along the brink of the gloomy seas,
Liquid mists of splendour quiver.
His very gestures touched to tears
The unpersuaded tyrant, never
So moved before : his presence stung
The tortures with their victim's pain,
And none knew how : and through their ears
The subtle witchcraft of his tongue
Unlocked the hearts of those who keep
Gold, the world's bond of slavery.
Men wondered, and some sneered to see
One sow what he could never reap :
For he is rich, they said, and young,
And might drink from the depths of luxury.
If he seeks fame, fame never crowned
The champion of a trampled creed :
If he seeks power, power is enthroned
'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,
Those who would sit near power must toil ;
And such, there sitting, all may see.
What seeks he ? - All that others seek
He casts away, like a vile weed
Which the sea casts unreturningly.
That poor and hungry men should break
The laws which wreak them toil and scorn.
We understand ; but Lionel
We know is rich and nobly born.
So wondered they : yet all men loved
Young Lionel, though few approved ;
All but the priests, whose hatred fell
Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,
The withering honey dew, which clings

Under the bright green buds of May,
Whilst they unfold their emerald wings:
For he made verses wild and queer
On the strange things priests hold so dear
Because they bring them land and gold.
Of devils and saints, and all such gear,
He made tales which whoso heard or read
Would laugh till he were almost dead.
So this grew a proverb: "don't get old
Till Lionel's 'banquet in hell' you hear,
And then you will laugh yourself young again."
So the priests hated him, and he
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.
Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,
For public hope grew pale and dim
In an altered time and tide,
And in its wasting withered him,
As a summer flower that blows too soon
Droops in the smile of the waning moon,
When it scatters through an April night
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.
None now hoped more. Grey Power was seated
Safely on her ancestral throne;
And Faith, the Python, undefeated,
Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on
Her foul and wounded train, and men
Were trampled and deceived again,
And words and shews again could bind
The wailing tribes of human kind
In scorn and famine. Fire and blood
Raged round the raging multitude,
To fields remote by tyrants sent
To be the scorned instrument
With which they drag from mines of gore
The chains their slaves yet ever wore;
And in the streets men met each other,
And by old altars and in halls,
And smiled again at festivals.
But each man found in his heart's brother
Cold cheer; for all, though half deceived,
The outworn creeds again believed,

And the same round anew began,
Which the weary world yet ever ran.
Many then wept, not tears, but gall,
Within their hearts, like drops which fall
Wasting the fountain-stone away.
And in that dark and evil day
Did all desires and thoughts, that claim
Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame,
Love, hope, though hope was now despair—
Indue the colours of this change,
As from the all-surrounding air
The earth takes hues obscure and strange,
When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befel
To many, most to Lionel,
Whose hope was like the life of youth
Within him, and, when dead, became
A spirit of unresting flame,
Which goaded him in his distress
Over the world's vast wilderness.
Three years he left his native land,
And on the fourth, when he returned
None knew him : he was stricken deep
With some disease of mind, and turned
Into aught unlike Lionel.
On him, on whom, did he pause in sleep,
Serenest smiles were wont to keep,
And, did he wake, a winged band
Of bright persuasions, which had fed
On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,
Kept their swift pinions half outspread,
To do on men his least command ;
On him, whom once 'twas paradise
Even to behold, now misery lay :
In his own heart 'twas merciless,
To all things else none may express
Its innocence and tenderness.
'Twas said that he had refuge sought
In love from his unquiet thought
In distant lands, and been deceived

By some strange shew : for there were found,
Blotted with tears as those relieved
By their own words are wont to do,
These mournful verses on the ground,
By all who read them blotted too.

“ How am I changed ! my hopes were once like fire
I loved, and I believed that life was love.
How am I lost ! on wings of swift desire
Among Heaven’s winds my spirit once did move.
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire
My liquid sleep : I woke, and did approve
All nature to my heart, and thought to make
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

“ I love, but I believe in love no more.
I feel desire, but hope not. Oh, from sleep
Most vainly must my weary brain implore
Its long lost flattery now : I wake to weep,
And sit through the long day gnawing the core
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep.
Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.”

He dwelt beside me near the seat :
And oft in evening did we meet,
When the waves, beneath the star-light, flee
O’er the yellow sands with silver feet,
And talked : our talk was sad and sweet,
Till slowly from his mien there passed
The desolation which it spoke :
And smiles,—as when the lightning’s blast
Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,
The next spring shews leaves pale and rare,
But like flowers delicate and fair,
On its rent boughs—again arrayed
His countenance in tender light :
His words grew subtle fire, which made
The air his hearers breathed delight :
His motions, like the winds, were free,
Which bend the bright grass gracefully,
Then fade away in circlets faint :

And winged hope, on which upborne
 His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,
 Like some bright spirit newly born
 Floating amid the sunny skies,
 Sprang forth from his rent heart anew,
 Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,
 Tempering their loveliness too keen,
 Past woe its shadow backward threw,
 Till like an exhalation, spread
 From flowers half drunk with evening dew,
 They did become infectious : sweet
 And subtle mists of sense and thought :
 Which wrapt us soon, when we might meet,
 Almost from our own looks and aught
 The wide world holds. And so, his mind
 Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear :
 For ever now his health declined,
 Like some frail bark which cannot bear
 The impulse of an altered wind,
 Though prosperous : and my heart grew full
 'Mid its new joy of a new care :
 For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,
 As rose o'ershadowed lilies are ;
 And soon his deep and sunny hair,
 In this alone less beautiful,
 Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.
 The blood in his translucent veins
 Beat, not like animal life, but love
 Seemed now its sullen springs to move,
 When life had failed, and all its pains :
 And sudden sleep would seize him oft
 Like death, so calm, but that a tear,
 His pointed eye-lashes between,
 Would gather in the light serene
 Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft
 Beneath lay undulating there.
 His breath was like inconstant flame,
 As eagerly it went and came ;
 And I hung o'er him in his sleep,
 Till, like an image in the lake
 Which rains disturb would break

The shadow of that slumber deep ;
Then he would bid me not to weep.
And say with flattery false, yet sweet,
That death and he could never meet,
If I would never part with him.
And so we loved, and did unite
All that in us was yet divided:
For when he said, that many a rite,
By men to bind but once provided,
Could not be shared by him and me,
Or they would kill him in their glee,
I shuddered, and then laughing said—
“ We will have rights our faith to bind,
But our church shall be the starry night,
Our altar the grassy earth outspread,
And our priest the muttering wind.”

’Twas sunset as I spoke: one star
Had scarce burst forth, when from afar
The ministers of misrule, sent,
Seized upon Lionel, and bore
His chained limbs to a dreary tower,
In the midst of a city vast and wide.
For he, they said, from his mind had bent
Against their gods keen blasphemy,
For which, though his soul must roasted be
In hell’s red lakes immortally,
Yet even on earth must he abide
The vengeance of their slaves: a trial,
I think, men call it. What avail
Are prayers and tears, which chase denial
From the fierce savage, nursed in hate ?
What the knit soul, shat pleading and pale
Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late
It painted with its own delight ?
We were divided. As I could,
I stilled the tingling of my blood,
And followed him in their despite,
As a widow follows, pale and wild,
The murderers and corse of her only child ;

And when we came to the prison door,
And I prayed to share his dungeon floor
With prayers which rarely have been spurned,
And when men drove me forth, and I
Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,
A farewell look of love he turned,
Half calming me ; then gazed awhile,
As if thro' that black and massy pile,
And thro' the crowd around him there,
And thro' the dense and murky air,
And the thronged streets, he did espy
What poets know and prophecy ;
And said, with voice that made them shiver
And clung like music in my brain,
And which the mute walls spoke again,
Prolonging it with deepened strain :
" Fear not, the tyrants shall rule for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith ;
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death ;
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks in the surge of eternity."

I dwelt beside the prison gate,
And the strange crowd that out and in
Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,
Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din,
But the fever of care was louder within.
Soon, but too late, in penitence
Or fear, his foes released him thence ;
I saw his thin and languid form,
As leaning on the jailer's arm,
Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,
To meet his mute and faded smile,
And hear his words of kind farewell,
He tottered forth from his damp cell.
Many had never wept before,
From whom fast tears then gushed and fell ;
Many will relent no more,

Who sobbed like infants then: aye, all
Who thronged the prison's stony hall,
The rulers or the slaves of law,
Felt with a new surprise and awe
That they were human, till strong shame
Made them again become the same.
The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,
From human looks the infection caught,
And fondly crouched and fawned on him
And men have heard the prisoners say,
Who in their rotting dungeons lay,
That from that hour, throughout one day,
The fierce despair and hate which kept
Their trampled bosoms almost slept
When, like twin vultures, they hung feeding
On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,
Because their jailers' rule, they thought,
Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.
I know not how, but we were free:
And Lionel sate alone with me,
As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace
And we looked upon each other's face:
And the blood in our fingers intertwined
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,
As the swift emotions went and came
Thro' the veins of each united frame.
So thro' the long long streets we past
Of the million-peopled City vast;
Which is that desert, where each one
Seeks his mate, yet is alone,
Beloved and sought and mourned of none
Until the clear blue sky was seen,
And the grassy meadows bright and green
And then I sunk in his embrace,
Enclosing there a mighty space
Of love: and so we travelled on
By woods, and fields of yellow flowers
And towns, and villages, and towers,
Day after day of happy hours.
It was the azure time of June,
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon

And the warm and fitful breezes shake
 The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row briar,
 And there were odours then to make
 The very breath we did respire
 A liquid element, whereon
 Our spirits, like delighted things
 That walk the air on subtle wings,
 Floated and mingled far away,
 'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.
 And when the evening star came forth
 Above the curve of the new bent moon,
 And light and sound ebbed from the earth,
 Like the tide of the full and weary sea
 To the depths of its tranquillity,
 Our natures to its own repose
 Did the earth's breathless sleep attune:
 Like flowers, which on each other close
 Their languid leaves when day-light's gone,
 We lay, till new emotions came,
 Which seemed to make each mortal frame
 One soul of interwoven flame,
 A life in life, a second birth
 In worlds diviner far than earth,
 Which, like two strains of harmony
 That mingle in the silent sky,
 Then slowly disunite, past by
 And left the tenderness of tears,
 A soft oblivion of all fears,
 A sweet sleep : so we travelled on
 Till we came to the home of Lionel,
 Among the mountains wild and lone,
 Beside the hoary western sea,
 Which near the verge of the echoing shore
 The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,
 As we alighted, wept to see
 His master changed so fearfully :
 And the old man's sobs did waken me
 From my dream of unremaining gladness :
 The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness

When I looked, and saw that there was death
On Lionel: yet day by day
He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,
And in my soul I dared to say,
Nothing so bright can pass away:
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,
But he is—O how beautiful!
Yet day by day he grew more weak,
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,
Which ne'er was loud, became more low:
And the light which flashed through his waxen
cheek
Grew faint, as the rose—like hues which flow
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:
And death seemed not like death in him,
For the spirit of life o'er every limb
Lingered, a mist of scene and thought.
When the summer wind faint odours brought
From mountain flowers, even as it passed,
His cheek would change, as the noon-day sea
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,
You might see his colour come and go,
And the softest strain of music made
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade.
Amid the dew of his tender eyes:
And the breath, with intermitting flow,
Made his pale lips quiver and part.
You might hear the beatings of his heart,
Quick, but not strong, and with my tresses
When oft he playfully would bind
In the bowers of mossy lonelineses
His neck, and win me so to mingle
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,
And our faint limbs were intertwined,
Alas! the unquiet life did tingle
From mine own heart through every vein,
Like a captive in dreams of liberty,
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.
But his, it seemed already free,
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me!

On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell
That spirit as it passed, till soon,
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,
Beneath its light invisible,
Is seen when it folds its grey wings again
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul
Passed from beneath that strong controul,
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear
Of all the woe that now I bear

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,
On a green and sea-girt promontory,
Not far from where we dwelt, there stood,
In record of a sweet sad story,
An altar and a temple bright
Circled by steps, and o'er the gate
Was sculptured, "To Fidelity;"
And in the shrine an image sate,
All veiled: but there was seen the light
Of smiles, which faintly could express
A mingled pain and tenderness
Through that ethereal drapery.
The left hand held the head, the right—
Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,
You might see the nerves quivering within—
Was forcing the point of a barbed dart
Into its side-convulsing heart.
An unskilled hand, yet one in ormed
With genius, had the marble warmed
With that pathetic life. This tale
It told: A dog had from the sea,
When the tide was raging fearfully,
Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale,
Then died beside her on the sand,
And she that temple thence had planned;
But it was Lionel's own hand
Had wrought the image. Each new moon
That lady did in this lone fane,
The rites of a religion sweet,
Whose god was in her heart and brain:

The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn
On the marble floor beneath her feet,
And she brought crowns of sea-buds white,
Whose odour is so sweet and faint,
And weeds, like branching chrysolyte,
Woven in devices fine and quaint,
And tears from her brown eyes did stain
The altar: need but look upon
That dying statue, fair and wan,
If tears should cease, to weep again:
And rare Arabian odours came,
Though the myrtle copses steaming thence
From the hissing frankincense,
Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,
Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,
That ivory dome, whose azure night
Whose golden stars, like heaven was bright
O'er the split cedars pointed flame;
And the lady's harp would kindle there
The melody of an old air
Softer than sleep; the villagers
Mixt their religion up with her's,
And, as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane;
Daylight on its last purple cloud
Was lingering grey, and soon her strain
The nightingale began; now loud,
Climbing in circles the windless sky,
Now dying music; suddenly
'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,
And now to the hushed ear it floats
Like field-smells known in infancy,
Then falling soothes the air again.
We sate within that temple lone,
Pavilioned round with Parian stone:
His mother's harp stood near, and oft
I had awakened music soft
Amid its wires; the nightingale
Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale:
"Now drain the cup," said Lionel,

• Which the poet-bird has crowned so well
With the wine of her bright and liquid song !
Heardst thou not sweet words among
That heaven-resounding minstrelsy ?
Heardst thou not, that those who die
Awake in a world of extacy ?
That love, when limbs are interwoven,
And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,
And thought, to the world's dim boundaries clinging,
And music, when one beloved is singing,
Is death ? Let us drain right joyously
The cup which the sweet bird fills for me."
He paused, and to my lips he bent
His own : like spirit his words went
Through all my limbs with the speed of fire ;
And his keen eyes, glittering through mine
Filled me with the flame divine,
Which in their orbs was burning far,
Like the light of an unmeasured star,
In the sky of midnight dark and deep :
Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire
Sounds, which my skill could ne'er awaken ;
And first, I felt my fingers sweep
The harp, and a long quivering cry
Burst from my lips in symphony :
The dusk and solid air was shaken,
As swift and swifter the notes came
From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,
And from my bosom, labouring
With some unutterable thing :
The awful sound of my own voice made
My faint lips tremble, in some mood
Of worldless thought Lionel stood
So pale, that even beside his cheek
The snowy column from its shade
Caught whiteness : yet his countenance,
Raised upward, burned with radiance
Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,
Like the moon struggling through the night
Of whirlwind rifted clouds, did break
With beams that might not be confined.

I paused, but soon his gestures kindled
New power, as by the moving wind
The waves are lifted, and my song
To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,
And from the twinkling wires among
My languid fingers drew and flung
Circles of life-dissolving sound,
Yet faint: in aery rings they bound
My Lionel, who, as every strain
Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien
Sunk with the sound relaxedly ;
And slowly now he turned to me,
As slowly faded from his face
That awful joy: with looks serene
He was soon drawn to my embrace,
And my wild song then died away
In murmurs: words, I dare not say
We mixed, and on his lips mine fed
Till they methought felt still and cold:
“ What is it with thee, love ? ” I said :
No word, no look, no motion ! yes,
There was a change, but spare to guess,
Nor let that moment's hope be told.
I looked, and knew that he was dead,
And fell, as the eagle on the plain
Falls, when life deserts her brain,
And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

Oh that I were now dead ! but such
Did they not, love, demand too much
Those dying murmurs ? He forbade.
Oh that I once again were mad !
And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,
For I would live to share thy woe.
Sweet boy, did I forget thee too ?
Alas, we know not what we do
When we speak words.

No memory more
Is in my mind of that sea shore
Madness came on me, and a troop
Of misty shapes did seem to sit

Beside me on a vessel's poop,
And the clear north wind was driving it.
Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange
flowers

And the stars methought grew unlike ours,
And the azure sky and the stormless sea
Made me believe that I had died,
And waked in a world, which was to me
Drear hell, though heaven to all beside :
Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,
Whilst animal life many long years
Had rescued from a chasm of tears ;
And when I woke, I wept to find
That the same lady, bright and wise,
With silver locks and quick brown eyes,
The mother of my Lionel,
Had tended me in my distress,
And died some months before. Nor less
Wonder, but far more peace and joy
Brought in that hour my lovely boy :
For through that trance my soul had well
The impress of thy being kept :
And if I waked, or if I slept,
No doubt, though memory faithless be,
Thy image ever dwelt on me ;
And thus, O Lionel, like thee
Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strango
I knew not of so great a change,
As that which gave him birth, who now
Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left
By will to me, and that of all
The ready lies of law bereft,
My child and me might well befall...
But let me think not of the scorn,
Which from the meanest I have borne,
When, for my child's beloved sake,
I mixed with slaves, to vindicate
The very laws themselves do make
Let me not say scorn is my fate,
Lest I be proud, suffering the same

With those who live in deathless fame.
She ceased.—“ Lo, where red morning thro’ the woods
Is burning o’er the dew:” said Rosalind.
And with these words they rose, and towards the
flood

Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind
With equal steps and fingers intertwined:
Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore
Is shadowed with steep rocks, and cypresses
Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies
And with their shadows the clear depths below,
And where a little terrace from its bowers,
Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers,
Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o’er
The liquid marble of the windless lake:
And where the aged forest’s limbs look hoar,
Under the leaves which their green garments make,
They come: ’tis Helen’s home, and clean and white
Like one which tyrants spare on our own land
In some such solitude, its casements bright
Shone thro’ their vine-leaves in the morning sun,
And even within ’twas scarce like Italy.
And when she saw how all things they were planned,
As in an English home, dim memory
Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood as one
Whose mind is where his body cannot be,
Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,
And said, “ Observe, that brow was Lionel’s,
Those lips were his, and so he ever kept
One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.
You cannot see his eyes, they are two wells
Of liquid love: let us not wake him yet.”
But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept
A shower of burning tears, which fell upon
His face, and so his opening lashes shone
With tears unlike his own, as he did leap
In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together
Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,
Such as they were, when o’er the mountain heather
They wandered in their youth, thro’ sun and rain.
And after many years, for human things

Change even like the ocean and the wind,
Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,
And in their circle thence some visitings
Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene ;
A lovely child she was, of looks serene,
And motions which o'er things indifferent shed
The grace and gentleness from whence they came.
And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind
Like springs which mingle in one flood became.
And in their union soon their parents saw
The shadow of the peace denied to them.
And Rosalind, for when the living stem
Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,
Died ere her time ; and with deep grief and awe
The pale survivors followed her remains
Beyond the region of dissolving rains,
Up the cold mountain she was wont to call
Her tomb ; and on Chiavenna's precipice
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,
Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun,
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,
The last, when it had sunk ; and thro' the night
The charioteers of Arctus wheeled round
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come,
With willing steps, climbing that rugged height,
And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound
With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,
Filled the fröre air with unaccustomed light ;
Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom
Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,
Whose sufferings too were less, death slower led
Into the peace of his dominion cold :
She died among her kindred, being old.
And know, that if love die not in the dead
As in the living, none of mortal kind
Are blest as Helen now and Rosalind.

EPIPSYCHIDION :

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE

AND UNFORTUNATE LADY

EMILIA V——,

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——.

My song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
 Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
 Of such hard matter dost thou entertain ;
 Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
 Thee to base company, (as chance may do)
 Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
 I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
 My last delight ! tell them that they are dull,
 And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

Sweet Spirit ! Sister of that orphan one,
 Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,
 In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
 These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird ! who, from thy narrow cage,
 Pourest such music, that it might assuage
 The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
 Were they not deaf to all sweet melody ;
 This song shall be thy rose : its petals pale
 Are deaf, indeed, my adored nightingale !
 But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
 And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-winged Heart ! who dost for ever
 Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,

Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered ; and thy panting wounded breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest !
I weep vain tears : blood would less bitter be,
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

Seraph of Heaven ! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality !
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse !
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe !
Thou Moon beyond the clouds ! Thou living Form
Among the Dead ! Thou Star above the Storm !
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror !
Thou Harmony of Nature's art ! Thou Mirror
In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on !
Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow ;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy :
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect : Emily,
I love thee ; though the world by no thin name
Will hide that love, from its unvalued shame.
Would we two had been twins of the same mother !
Or, that the name my heart lent to another
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity !
Yet were one lawful and the other true,
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah, me !
I am not thine : I am a part of thee.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burnt its wings,
 Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
 Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,
 All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
 A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless?
 A well of sealed and secret happiness,
 Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
 Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star
 Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone?
 A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
 Amid rude voices? a beloved light?
 A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?
 A Lute, which those whom love has taught to play
 Make music on, to soothe the roughest day,
 And lull fond grief asleep? a buried treasure?
 A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?
 A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure
 The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,
 And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me Stranger, upon Life's rough way,
 And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day
 Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
 Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
 In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
 Were less ethereally light: the brightness
 Of her divinest presence trembles through
 Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
 Embodied in the windless Heaven of June,
 Amid the splendour-winged stars, the Moon
 Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:
 And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
 Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
 Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops
 Of planetary music heard in trance.
 In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
 The sun-beams of those wells which ever leap
 Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
 For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.

The glory of her being, issuing thence,
 Stains the dead, blank, cold air, with a warm shade
 Of unentangled intermixture, made
 By Love, of light and motion : one intense
 Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing
 Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing
 With the unintermitted blood, which there
 Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air
 The crimson pulse of living morning quiver.)
 Continuously prolonged, and ending never,
 Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
 Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world ;
 Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
 Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress,
 And her loose hair, and where some heavy tress
 The air of her own speed has disentwined,
 The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind ;
 And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—
 See where she stands ! a mortal shape indued
 With love and life and light and deity,
 And motion which may change but cannot die ;
 An image of some bright Eternity ;
 A shadow of some golden dream ; a Splendour
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless ; a tender
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move ;
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning ;
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
 Into his summer grave.

Ah ! woe is me !

What have I dared ? where am I lifted ? how
 Shall I descend, and perish not ? I know
 That Love makes all things equal : I have heard
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred •
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate
 Whose course has been so starless! O too late
 Beloved! O too soon adored, by me!
 For in the fields of immortality
 My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
 A divine presence in a place divine;
 Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
 But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal
 Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
 For thee, since in those tears thou hast delight.
 We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,
 For one another, though dissimilar;
 Such difference without discord, as can make
 Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
 As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
 Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.
 I never was attached to that great sect,
 Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
 Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
 To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
 Who travel to their home among the dead
 By the broad highway of the world, and so,
 With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay,
 That to divide is not to take away.
 Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
 Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,
 Imagination! which, from earth and sky,
 And from the depths of human phantasy,
 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
 The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
 Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
 Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow

The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:
Evil from good; misery from happiness;
The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must endure.
If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not
How much, while any yet remains unshared,
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
By which those live, to whom this world of life
Is a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore,
Under the grey beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
That I beheld her not. In solitudes
Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,
And from the fountains, and the odours deep
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep
Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,
Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air;
And from the breezes whether low or loud,
And from the rain of every passing cloud,
And from the singing of the summer birds,
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words

Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,
Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm
Which with the shattered present chokes the past ;
And in that best philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ;
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,
And towards the loadstar of my one desire,
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—
But She, whom prayers or tears, then could not tame
Past, like a God throned on a winged planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade ;
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
I would have followed, though the grave between
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen :
When a voice said :—" O Thou of hearts the weakest,
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest."
Then I—"where?" the world's echo answered "where!"
And in that silence, and in my despair,
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul ;
And murmured names and spells which have controul
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate ;
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
The night which closed on her ; nor uncreate
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her,
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear,
And every gentle passion sick to death,
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
Into the wintry forest of our life ;

And struggling through its error with vain strife,
 And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
 And half bewildered by new forms, I past
 Seeking among those untaught foresters
 If I could find one form resembling hers,
 In which she might have masked herself from me.
 There,—One, whose voice was venom'd melody
 Sate by a well, under blue night-shade bowers;
 The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
 Her touch was as electric poison,—flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came,
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay
 Upon its leaves: until, as hair grown grey
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.
 And some were fair—but beauty dies away:
 Others were wise—but honeyed words betray:
 And One was true—oh! why not true to me?
 Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
 I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
 Wounded and weak and panting: the cold day
 Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain,
 When, like a noon-day dawn, there shone again
 Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed
 As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,
 As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
 Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;
 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright
 isles,
 Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,
 That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
 Which ever is transformed, yet still the same.
 And warms not but illumines. Young and fair
 As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
 She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
 From its own darkness, until all was bright

Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,
 And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,
 She led me to a cave in that wild place,
 And sate beside me, with her downward face
 Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
 Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.
 And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
 And all my being became bright or dim
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
 According as she smiled or frowned on me ;
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed :
 Alas, I then was, nor alive nor dead :—
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
 Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
 And through the cavern without wings they flew,
 And cried " Away, he is not of our crew."
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep—.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse ;—
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
 And who was then its Tempest ; and when She,
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
 Crept o'er those waters, 'till from coast to coast
 The moving billows of my being fell
 Into a death of ice, immoveable ;—
 And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
 These words conceal :—If not, each word would be
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me !

At length, into the obscure Forest came
 The vision I had sought through grief and shame.
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
 Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,
 And from her presence life was radiated
 Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead ;
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love ;
 And music from her respiration spread

Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated
By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
So that the savage winds hung mute around ;
And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair
Dissolving the dull cold in the froze air
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is changed to love, this glorious One
Floated into the cavern where I lay,
And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
Was penetrating me with living light :
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
So many years—that it was Emily.

Thin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
This world of love, this *me* ; and into birth
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
Magnetic might into its central heart ;
And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
By everlasting laws each wind and tide
To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave ;
And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
The armies of the rainbow-winged showers ;
And, as those married lights, which from the towers
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe ;
And all their many-mingled influence blend,
If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end ;—
So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
Govern my sphere of being, night and day !
Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might ;
Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light ;
And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
Thou, too, O Comet, beautiful and fierce,
Who drew the heart of this frail Universe

Towards thine own; till, wreckt in that convulsion,
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,
 Thine went astray, and that was rent in twain;
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
 Be there love's folding-star at thy return;
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
 Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn
 In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
 And lights and shadows: as the star of Death
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild
 Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled
 Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
 A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,
 Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
 To whatsoe'er of dull mortality
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still;
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
 Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
 The hour is come:—the destined Star has risen
 Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
 The sentinels—but true love never yet
 Was thus constrained: It overleaps all fence:
 Like lightning, with invisible violence
 Piercing its continents: like Heaven's free breath,
 Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
 Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they.
 For it can burst his charnel, and make free
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
 The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbour now,
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow :
 There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before ;
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles ;
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles ;
 The merry mariners are bold and free :
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me ?
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
 Is a far Eden of the purple East ;
 And we between her wings will sit, while Night,
 And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
 Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
 Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
 It is an isle under Ionian skies,
 Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
 And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
 This land would have remained a solitude
 But for some pastoral people native there,
 Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
 Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
 Simple and spirited ; innocent and bold.
 The blue Ægean gives this chosen home, $\pm$ /
 With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
 Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar ;
 And all the winds wandering along the shore
 Undulate with the undulating tide :
 There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide ;
 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
 As clear as elemental diamond,
 Or serene morning air ; and far beyond,
 The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
 (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year.)
 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
 Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
 Illumining, with sound that never fails
 Accompany the noon-day nightingales ;
 And all the place is peopled with sweet airs ;
 The light clear element which the isle wears

Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep :
And from the moss, violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain,
'Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison :
Which is a soul within the soul—they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity ;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air.
It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks ; blind vultures, they
Sail onward far upon their fatal way :
The winged storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight.
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess :
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen
O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
Filling their bare and void interstices.—
But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know :
Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height

It overtops the woods ; but, for delight,
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
 Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
 Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
 But, as it were, Titanic ; in the heart
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
 Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
 Lifting itself in caverns light and high :
 For all the antique and learned imagery
 Has been erased, and in the place of it
 The ivy and the wild-vine interknit
 The volumes of their many twining stems ;
 Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
 The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky
 Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
 With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen,
 Or fragments of the day's intense serene :
 Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
 And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
 And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
 To sleep in one another's arms, and dream [we
 Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that
 Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed
 Thee to be lady of the solitude.—
 And I have fitted up some chambers there
 Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
 And level with the living winds, which flow
 Like waves above the living waves below.—
 I have sent books and music there, and all
 Those instruments with which high spirits call
 The future from its cradle, and the past
 Out of its grave, and make the present last
 In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,
 Folded within their own eternity.
 Our simple life wants little, and true taste
 Hires not the pale drudge Luxury to waste

The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,
Nature, with all her children, haunts the hill.
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moon-light
Before our gate, and the slow silent night
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years heap
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,
Let us become the over-hanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour;
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
(Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea)
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—
Possessing and possessed by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
The moon-light of the expired night asleep,
Through which the awakened day can never peep:
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.
And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words, to live again in looks, which dart
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
Harmonizing silence without a sound.
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms hound,
And our veins beat together; and our lips,
With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them, and the wells

Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
 The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
 Confused in passion's golden purity,
 As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.
 We shall become the same, we shall be one
 Spirit within two frames, oh ! wherefore two ?
 One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
 'Till, like two meteors of expanding flame,
 Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured ; ever still
 Burning, yet ever inconsumable :
 In one another's substance finding food,
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away :
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
 And one annihilation. Woe is me !
 The winged words on which my soul would pierce
 Into the height of love's rare Universe,
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.—
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire !

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
 And say :—"We are the masters of thy slave :
 "What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine ?"
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,
 All singing loud : "Love's very pain is sweet
 "But its reward is in the world divine,
 "Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave"
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
 Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
 And bid them love each other and be blest
 And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
 And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

END OF EPIPSYCHIDION

ADONAI8,

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS.

I WEEP for ADONAI8—he is dead !
 Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
 And teach them thine own sorrow: say—with me
 Died Adonais!—till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity !

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
 In darkness? where was lorn Urania
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
 Mid list'ning Echoes, in her Paradise
 She sate, while one, with soft enamour'd breath,
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,
 With which, like flowers that mock the corpse beneath
 had adorn'd and hid the coming bulk of death.

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead !
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep !
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
 Descend:—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
 Will yet restore him to the vital air ;
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our des p^{ai}
 Most musical of mourners, weep again !
 Lament anew, Urania !—He died,
 Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride.

The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
 Of lust and blood: he went, unterrified
 Trampled and mock'd with many a loathed rite
 Into the gulph of death; but his clear sprite
 Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
 And happier they their happiness who knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
 In which suns perished; others more sublime,
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road, [abode
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene

But now thy youngest, dearest one has perish'd,
 The nurseling of thy widowhood, who grew,
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherish'd,
 And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
 The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste,
 The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
 He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
 A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace,
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface

So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn
there lot

Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, nor find a home again.

And one with trembling hand clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead:
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosen'd from his brain,"
Lost Angel of a ruin'd Paradise,
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Wash'd his light limbs, as if embalming them.
Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem:
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quench'd its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flush'd through his pale limbs, and pass'd to its eclipse.

And others came,—Desires and Adorations,
 Winged Persuasions and veil'd Destinies,
 Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies ;
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
 Came in slow pomp ;—the moving pomp might seem
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
 Dimm'd the ærial eyes that kindle day :
 Afar the melancholy thunder moan'd,
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
 And the wild winds flew around, sobbing in their dismay

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
 And feeds her grief with his remember'd lay,
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
 Or amorous birds perch'd on the young green spray
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day :
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
 Than those for whose disdain they pined away
 Into a shadow of all sounds :—a drear
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodman hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw
 down
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
 Or they dead leaves : since her delight is flown,
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year ?
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
 Thou Adonais : wan they stand and sere
 Amid the drooping comrades of their youth,
 With dew all turn'd to tears : odour, to sighing ruth.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;

Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, re-appear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere,
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprison'd flames, out of their trance awake.

Through wood, and stream, and field, and hill, and
Ocean;
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world, when first
God dawn'd on Chaos: in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

The leprous corpse, touch'd by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death,
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning?—th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quench'd in a most cold repose.

Alas! that all we loved of him should be
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!

Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene—
 The actors or spectators ? Great and mean
 Meet mass'd in death, wholends what life must borrow.
 As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow.
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to
 sorrow.

He will awake no more, oh, never more !
 "Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
 Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
 A wound more fierce than his tears and sighs."
 And all the Dreams that watch'd Urania's eyes
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
 Had held in holy silence, cried : "Arise !"
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
 Has left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
 So struck, so roused, so rapt, Urania :
 So sadden'd round her like an atmosphere
 Of stormy mist ; so swept her on her way,
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
 Through camps and cities rough with stone and steel,
 And human hearts, which to her aery thread
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell :
 And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than
 they,
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
 Blush'd to annihilation, and the breath

Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flash'd through those limbs, so late her dear delight
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless.
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania; her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain
caress.

"Stay yet a while! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live:
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chain'd to Time, and cannot thence depart!

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh! where was then
Wisdom the mirror'd shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have fill'd its crescent sphere,
he monsters of life's haste had fled from thee like deer.

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them as they go.

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn:
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gather'd into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So it is in the world of living men,

A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
 Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
 It sinks, the swarms that dimm'd or shared its light
 Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
 The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
 An early but enduring monument,
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
 In sorrow; for her wilds Ierne sent
 The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
 And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

'Midst others of less note came one frail Form,
 A Phantom among men; companionless
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
 Whose thunder is its knell: he as I guess,
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
 Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
 Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—
 A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
 Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
 The weight of the superincumbent hour;
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
 A breaking billow;—even while we speak
 Is it not broken? On the withering flower
 The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may
 break.

His head was bound with pansies over-blown,
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew,
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
 Shook the weak hand that grasp'd it; of that crew

He came the last, neglected and apart;
 A herd-abandon'd deer, struck by the hunter's dart.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
 Smiled through the tears; well knew that gentle band
 Who in another's fate now wept his own;
 As in the accents of an unknown land
 He sang new sorrow; sad Urania scann'd
 The Stranger's mein, and murmur'd: "Who art thou?"
 He answer'd not, but with a sudden hand
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's.—Oh! that is should
 be so!

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
 In mockery of monumental stone,
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
 If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
 Taught, soothed, loved, honor'd the departed one;
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
 The nameless worm would now itself disown:
 It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song,
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre's unstrung.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remember'd name!
 But to thyself, and know thyself to be!
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow.
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
 Far from these carrion-kites that scream below ;
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead ;
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
 Dust to the dust ! but the pure spirit shall flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence he came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

Peace, peace ! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
 He hath awaken'd from the dream of life—
 'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
 Invulnerable nothings—We decay
 Like corpses in a charnel ; fear and grief
 Convulse us and consume us day by day,
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay

He has outsoar'd the shadow of our night ;
 Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again ;
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain ;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he ;
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone ;
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan !
 Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
 O'er the abandon'd Earth, now leave it bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair.

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird,

He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
 All new successions to the forms they wear ;
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;
 And bursting in its beauty and its might
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

The splendors of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extingulsh'd not ;
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
 And love and life contend in it, for what
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there,
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfill'd renown
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
 Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
 Yet faded from him ; Sidney as he fought
 And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
 Arose ; and Lucan, by his death approved :
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

And many more, whose names on earth are dark,
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
 "Thou art become as one of us," they cry :
 "It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long

Swung blind in unascended majesty,
 Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.
 Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

Who mourns for Adonais? oh come forth,
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Sate the void circumference: then shrink
 Even to a point within our day and night;
 And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the
 brink,

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
 That ages, empires, and religions, there
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought,
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;
 And he is gather'd to the kings of thought
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
 And where its wrecks like shatter'd mountains rise,
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread,

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
 Pavilioning the dust of him who plann'd
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transform'd to marble; and beneath
 A field is spread, on which a newer band

Have pitch'd in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguish'd breath

Here pause : these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consign'd
Its charge to each ; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou ! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become ?

The One remains, the many change and pass ;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
Life, like a dome of many-colour'd glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek
Follow where all is fled !—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart ?
Thy hopes are gone before : from all things here
They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman ; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near.
'Tis Adonais calls ! oh, hasten hither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven !
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are

END OF ADONAIS.

HELLAS ;

A LYRICAL DRAMA.

—o—

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHMUD.
HASSAN.

DAOOD.
AHASUERUS, a Jew.

Chorus of Greek Captive Women.

Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants.

SCENE—Constantinople.

TIME—Sunset.

—

SCENE—A Terrace on the Seraglio.

MAHMUD (sleeping) an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.

Chorus of Greek Captive Women.

We strew these opiate flowers
On thy restless pillow,—
They were stript from Orient bowers
By the Indian billow.
Be thy sleep
Calm and deep,

Like theirs who fell— not ours who weep!
Indian. Away, unlovely dreams!

Away, false shapes of sleep.
Be his; as heaven seems,
Clear, bright, and deep!
Soft as love and calm as death,
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.
With the soul of slumber;

Chorus. Sleep, sleep! our song is laden

It was sung by a Samian maiden
 Whose lover was of the number
 Who now keep
 That calm sleep

Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

Indian. I touch thy temples pale!

I breathe my soul on thee!

And, could my prayers avail,

All my joy should be

Dead, and I would live to weep,

So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

Chorus. Breathe low, low,

The spell of the mighty mistress now!

When conscience lulls her sated snake,

And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.

Breathe low, low,

The words which, like secret fire, shall flow

Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

Semicho. I. Life may change, but it may fly not;

Hope may vanish, but can die not;

Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;

Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

Semicho. II. Yet were life a charnel, where

Hope lay coffin'd with despair;

Yet were truth a sacred lie,

Love were lust—

Semicho. I. If Liberty

Lent not life its soul of light,

Hope its iris of delight,

Truth its prophet's robe to wear,

Love its power to give and hear.

Chorus. In the great morning of the world,

The spirit of God with might unfurl'd

The flag of Freedom over Chaos,

And all its banded anarchs fled,

Like vultures frighted from Imaus,

Before an earthquake's tread—

So from Time's tempestuous dawn

Freedom's splendor burst and shone:—

Thermopylæ and Marathon

Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,

The springing fire.—The winged glory
 Of Philippi half-alighted,
 Like an eagle on a promontory
 Its unwearied wings could fan
 The quenchless ashes of Milan. *
 From age to age, from man to man,
 It lived : and lit from land to land
 Florence, Albion, Switzerland :
 Then night fell ; and as from night
 Re-assuming fiery flight,
 From the West swift Freedom came,
 Against the course of heaven and doom
 A second sun array'd in flame :
 To burn, to kindle, to illumine,
 From far Atlantis its young beams
 Chased the shadows and the dreams.
 France, with all her sanguine streams,
 Hid but quench'd it not ; again
 Through clouds its shafts of glory ran
 From utmost Germany to Spain.
 As an eagle fed with morning
 Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
 When she seeks her airy hanging
 In the mountain cedar's hair,
 And her brood expect the clanging
 Of her wings through the wild air,
 Sick with famine—Freedom so
 'To what of Greece remaineth now
 Returns ; her hoary ruins glow
 Like orient mountains lost in day ;
 Beneath the safety of her wings
 Her renovated nurselings play,
 And in the naked lightnings

* Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin.—See Sismondi's "*Histoire des Republiques Italiennes*," a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes,
Let Freedom leave, where'er she flies,
A desert or a Paradise;

Let the beautiful and the brave
Share her glory or a grave.

Semicho. I. With the gifts of gladness
Greece did thy cradle strew.

Semicho. II. With the tears of sadness
Greece did thy shroud bedew.

Semicho. I. With an orphan's affection
She follow'd thy bier through time;

Semicho. II. And at thy resurrection
Re-appeareth, like thou, sublime!

Semicho. I. If Heaven should resume thee,
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

Semicho. II. If Hell should entomb thee,
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

Semicho. I. If Annihilation—

Semicho. II. Dust let her glories be;

And a name and a nation

Be forgotten. Freedom, with thee!

Indian. His brow grows darker—breathe not—move
not!

He starts—he shudders;—ye that love not,

With your panting loud and fast

Have awaken'd him at last.

MAHMUD (starting from his sleep.)

Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate.

What! from a cannonade of three short hours?

'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus

Cannot be practicable yet.—Who stirs?

Stand to the match, that, when the foe prevails,

One spark may mix in reconciling ruin

The conqueror and the conquer'd! Heave the
tower

Into the gap—wrench off the roof!

Enter HASSAN.

Ha! what!

The truth of day lightens upon my dream,
And I am Mahmud still

Has. Your Sublime Highness
 Is strangely moved.

Mah. The times do cast strange shadows
 On those who watch and who must rule their course,
 Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
 Be whelm'd in the fierce ebb ;—and these are of them.
 Thrice has a gloomy vision haunted me
 As thus from sleep into the troubled day ;
 It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,
 Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.
 Would that—no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
 A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
 Of strange and secret and forgotten things,
 I bade thee summon him :—'tis said his tribe
 Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

Has. The Jew of whom I speak is old,—so old
 He seems to have outlived a world's decay ;
 The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean
 Seem younger still than he ;—his hair and beard
 Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow :
 His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
 Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct
 With light, and to the soul that quickens them
 Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
 To the winter wind :—but from his eye looks forth
 A life of unconsumed thought, which pierces
 The present, and the past, and the to-come.
 Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
 Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery
 Mock'd with the curse of immortality.
 Some feign that he is Enoch ; others dream
 He was pre-adamite, and has survived
 Cycles of generation and of ruin.
 The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence
 And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
 Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
 In years outstretch'd beyond the date of man,
 May have obtain'd to sovereignty and science
 Over those strong and secret things and thoughts
 Which others fear and know not.

Mah. I would talk
 With this old Jew.

Has Thy will is even now
 Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern
 'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible
 Than thou or God ! He who would question him
 Must sail alone at sun-set, where the stream
 Of ocean sleeps around those foamless isles
 When the young moon is westering as now,
 And evening airs wander upon the wave ;
 And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,
 Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow
 Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water ;
 Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud,
 Ahasuerus ! and the caverns round
 Will answer, Ahasuerus ! If his prayer
 Be granted, a faint meteor will arise,
 Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
 Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,
 And with the wind a storm of harmony
 Unutterably sweet, and pilot him
 Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus :
 Thence, at the hour and place and circumstance,
 Fit for the matter of their conference,
 The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare,
 Win the desired communion—but that shout
 Bodes—— [A shout without

Mah. Evil, doubtless ; like all human sounds,
 Let me converse with spirits.

Has. That shout again ;

Mah. This Jew whom thou hast summon'd—

Has. Will be here—

Mah. When the omnipotent hour, to which are yoked
 He, I, and all things, shall compel—enough.
 Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew
 That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
 Aye ! strike the foremost shorter by a head !
 They weary me, and I have need of rest.
 Kings are like stars—they rise and set ; they have
 The worship of the world, but no repose.

[Exeunt severally.]

Chorus. Worlds on worlds are rolling ever

From creation to decay,
 Like the bubbles on a river,
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away
 But they are still immortal
 Who, through birth's orient portal,
 And Death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
 Clothe their unceasing flight
 In the brief dust and light
 Gather'd around their chariots as they go ;
 New shapes they still may weave,
 New Gods, new laws, receive :
 Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last
 On Death's bare ribs had cast.
 A power from the unknown God,
 A Promethean conqueror came ;
 Like a triumphal path he trod
 The thorns of death and shame.
 A mortal shape to him
 Was like the vapour dim
 Which the orient planet animates with light -
 Hell, Sin, and Slavery, came
 Like blood hounds mild and tame,
 Nor prey'd until their lord had taken flight,
 The moon of Mahomet
 Arose, and it shall set ;
 While blazon'd as on heaven's immortal noon
 The cross leads generations on.
 Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep,
 From one whose dreams are paradise,
 Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
 And day peers forth with her blank eyes,
 So fleet, so faint, so fair,
 The powers of earth and air
 Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem :
 Apollo, Pan, and Love,
 And even Olympian Jove
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on the m.
 Our hills, and seas, and streams,
 Dispeopled of their dreams,
 Their waters turn'd to blood, their dew to tears,
 Wail'd for the golden years.

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, and others.

Mah. More gold? Our ancestors bought gold with victory,

And shall I sell it for defeat?

Daood. The Janizars

Clamour for pay.

Mah. Go! bid them pay themselves

With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins
Whose shrieks, and spasms, and tears, they may enjoy?
No infidel children to impale on spears?
No hoary priests after the patriarch *
Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill:
Blood is the seed of gold.

Daood. It has been sown,

And yet the harvest to the sickle-men

Is as a grain to each.

Mah. Then take this signet:

Unlock the seventh chamber, in which lie

The treasures of victorious Solyman.

An empire's spoils stored for a day of ruin—

O spirit of my sires! is it not come?

The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged, and sleep.

But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,

Hunger for gold, which fills not. See them fed;

Then lead them to the rivers of fresh death. [*Exit Daood.*

O miserable dawn, after a night

More glorious than the day which it usurp'd!

O faith in God! O power on earth! O word

Of the great Prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings

Darken'd the thrones and idols of the west,

Now bright!—For thy sake cursed be the hour,

Even as a father by an evil child,

When the orient moon of Islam roll'd in triumph

From Caucasus to white Ceraunia!

Ruin above, and anarchy below;

* The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Terror without, and treachery within :
 The chalice of destruction full, and all
 Thirsting to drink ; and who among us dares
 To dash it from his lips ? and where is Hope ?

Has. The lamp of our dominion still rides high ;
 One God is God—Mahomet is his Prophet.
 Four hundred thousand Moslems from the limits
 Of utmost Asia irresistibly
 Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry,
 But not like them to weep their strength in tears ;
 They have destroying lightning, and their step
 Wakes earthquake, to consume and overwhelm,
 And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
 Tymolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
 With horrent arms, and lofty ships, even now
 Like vapours anchor'd to a mountain's edge,
 Freight with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala
 The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
 Etna is drunk with blood ;—the Greek has paid
 Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
 The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far
 When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah !
 Rose like the war cry of the northern wind,
 Which kills the sluggish clouds and leaves a flock
 Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.
 So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day !
 If night is mute, yet the returning sun
 Kindles the voices of the morning birds ;
 Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
 Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,
 The anarchies of Africa unleash
 Their tempest-winged cities of the sea,
 To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
 Like sulphureous clouds half-shatter'd by the storm
 They sweep the pale *Ægean*, while the Queen
 Of Ocean, bound upon her island throne,
 Far in the west sits mourning that her sons,
 Who frown on Freedom, spare a smile for thee :
 Russia still hovers, as an eagle might
 Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
 Hang tangled in inextricable fight,

To stoop upon the victor;—for she fears
 The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine;
 But recreant Austria loves thee as the grave
 Loves pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,
 Flesh'd with the chase, come up from Italy,
 And howl upon their limits; for they see
 The panther Freedom fled to her old cover
 Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood
 Crouch around. What anarch wears a crown or mitre,
 Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
 Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes?
 Our arsenals and our armories are full;
 Our forts defy assaults; ten thousand cannon
 Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour
 Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;
 The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale
 The Christian merchant, and the yellow Jew
 Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
 Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds
 Over the hills of Anatolia,
 Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry
 Sweep:—the far-flashing of their starry lances
 Reverberates the dying light of day.
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law,
 But many-headed Insurrection stands
 Divided in itself, and soon must fall.

Mah. Proud words, when deeds come short, are soon
 sonable:

Look, Hassan, on yon crested moon, emblazon'd
 Upon that shatter'd flag of fiery cloud
 Which leads the rear of the departing day,
 Wan emblem of an empire fading now!
 See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
 And, like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent,
 Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
 One star with insolent and victorious light
 Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,
 Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
 Strikes its weak form to death.

Has.
 Renews itself——

Even as that moon

Mah. Shall we be not renew'd ?
 Far other bark than ours were needed now
 To stem the torrent of descending time :
 The spirit that lifts the slave before its lord
 Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,
 And spreads his ensign in the wilderness ;
 Exults in chains ; and, when the rebel falls,
 Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust ;
 And the inheritors of earth, like beasts
 When earthquake is unleash'd, with idiot fear
 Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.
 What were defeat, when Victory must appal ?
 Or Danger, when Security looks pale ?
 How said the messenger, who, from the fort
 Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle
 Of Bucharest ?—that—

Has. Ibrahim's scimitar
 Drew with its gleam swift victory from heaven,
 To burn before him in the night of battle—
 A light and a destruction.

Mah. Ah ! the day
 Was ours ; but how ?

Has. The light Wallachians,
 The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies,
 Fled from the glance of our artillery
 Almost before the thunder-stone alit ;
 One half the Grecian army made a bridge
 Of safe and slow retreat with Moslem dead ;
 The other—

Mah Speak—tremble not—

Has. Islanded
 By victor myriads, form'd in hollow square
 With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
 The deluge of our foaming cavalry ;
 Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
 Our baffled army trembled like one man
 Before a host, and gave them space ; but soon,
 From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
 Yet none approach'd : till, like a field of corn
 Under the hook of the swart sickle man,
 The bands intrench'd in mounds of Turkish dead

Grew weak and few.—Then, said the Pacha, “Slaves,
Render yourselves!—They have abandon’d you—
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?
We grant your lives.”—“Grant that which is thine own,
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!”
Another—“God, and man, and hope, abandon me;
But I to them and to myself remain
Constant;”—he bow’d his head, and his heart burst.
A third exclaim’d, “There is a refuge, tyrant,
Where thou dar’st not pursue, and canst not harm,
Shouldst thou pursue: there we shall meet again.”
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!
So these survivors, each by different ways,
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,
Met in triumphant death; and when our army,
Closed in, while yet in wonder, awe, and shame,
Held back the base hyenas of the battle
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
One rose out of the choas of the slain;
And, if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
Of the old saviours of the land we rule
Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;
Or if there burn’d within the dying man
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith
Creating what it feign’d, I cannot tell,
But he cried, Phantoms of the free, we come!
Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
And thaw their frost-work diadems like dew!—
O ye who float around this clime, and weave
The garment of the glory which it wears,
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasp’d,
Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;
Progenitors of all that yet is great,
Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept,
In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!
And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale

When the crush'd worm rebels beneath your tread—
 The vultures, and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
 Are overgorged ; but, like oppressors, still
 They crave the relic of destruction's feast :
 The exhalations and the thirsty winds
 Are sick with blood ; the dew is foul with death—
 Heaven's light is quench'd in slaughter ; thus where'er
 Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
 The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
 Of these dead limbs upon your streams and mountains,
 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your nouse-tops,
 Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
 With poison'd light—Famine, and Pestilence,
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side !
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved
 Against ye ; Time has found ye light as foam
 The Earth rebels ; and Good and Evil stake
 Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
 On this one cast—but, ere the die be thrown,
 The renovated genius of our race,
 Proud umpire of the impious game, descends
 A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding
 The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
 Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,
 And you to Oblivion !"—More he would have said,
 But—

Mah. Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
 Their ruin in the hues of our success.
 A rebel's crime, guilt with a rebel's tongue !
 Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

Has. It may be so :
 A spirit not my own wrench'd me within,
 And I have spoken words I fear and hate ;
 Yet would I die for—

Mah. Live ! O live ! outlive
 Me and this singing empire :—but the fleet—

Has. Alas :

Mah. The fleet which, like a flock of clouds
 Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner !
 Our winged castles from their merchant ships !

Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!
 Our arms before their chains! our years of empire
 Before their centuries of servile fear!
 Death is awake! Repulsed on the waters,
 They own no more the thunder-bearing banner
 Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,
 Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

Has. Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae, saw
 The wreck—

Mah. The caves of the Icarian isles
 Hold each to the other in loud mockery,
 And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes
 First of the sea-convulsing fight—and then—
 Thou dar'st to speak—senseless are the mountains;
 Interpret thou their voices.

Has. My presence bore
 A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
 Bore down at day-break from the North, and hung
 As multitudinous on the ocean line
 As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.
 Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
 Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
 Was kindled.—

First through the hail of our artillery
 The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail
 Dash'd:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
 To man, were grappled in the embrace of war,
 Inextricable but by death or victory.
 The tempest of the raging fight convulsed
 To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,
 And shook heaven's roof of golden morning clouds
 Poised on a hundred azure mountain-isles.
 In the brief trances of the artillery,
 One cry from the destroy'd and the destroyer
 Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapt
 The unforeseen event, till the north wind
 Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
 Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory!
 For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
 Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon
 The abhorr'd cross glimmer'd behind, before,

Among, around us; and that fatal sign
Dried with its beams the strength of Moslem hearts.
As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!
Our noonday path over the sanguine foam
Was beacon'd, and the glare struck the sun pale
By our consuming transports: the fierce light
Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
The ravening fire even to the water's level:
Some were blown up: some settling heavily,
Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died
Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,
Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perish'd!
We met the vultures legion'd in the air,
Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind:
They, screaming from their cloudy mountain peak,
Stoop'd through the sulphureous battle-smoke, and
perch'd
Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,
Like its ill angel or its damned soul.
Riding upon the bosom of the sea,
We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,
And ravening famine left his ocean-cave
To dwell with war, with us, and with despair.
We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
And, with night, tempest—

Mah.

Cease!

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. Your Sublime Highness,
That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,
Has left the city. If the rebel fleet
Had anchor'd in the port, had victory
Crown'd the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,
Panic were tamer.—Obedience and mutiny,
Like giants in contention planet-struck,
Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace
In Stamboul.—

Mah. Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine.

Has. Fear not the Russian :
 The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
 Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,
 He crouches, watching till the spoil he won,
 And must be paid for his reserve in blood.
 After the war is fought, yeld the sleek Russian
 That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion
 Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,
 Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
 But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves !

Enter Second Messenger.

2nd Mes. Nauplia, Tripolizzi, Mothon, Athens,
 Navarin, Artas, Mowenbasia,
 Corinth, and Thebes, are carried by assault :
 And every Islamite who made his dogs
 Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves,
 Pass'd at the edge of the sword : the lust of blood,
 Which made our warriors drunk, is quench'd in death,
 But, like a fiery plague, breaks out anew
 In deeds which makes the Christian cause look pale
 In its own light. The garrison of Patras
 Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
 But from the Briton : at once slave and tyrant,
 His wishes still are weaker than his fears :
 Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
 From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway ;
 And, if you buy him not, your treasury
 Is empty even of promises—his own coin.
 The freeman of a western poet chief*
 Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels.

* A Greek, who had been Lord Byron's servant, commanded the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make me what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or greatness, whose connexion with our character is determined by events.

And has beat back the Pacha of Negrepont :
 The aged Ali sits in Yanina,
 A crownless metaphor of empire ;
 His name, that shadow of his wither'd might,
 Holds our besieging army like a spell
 In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny :
 He, bastion'd in his citadel, looks forth
 Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
 The ruins of the city where he reign'd
 Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reap'd
 The costly harvest his own blood matured,
 Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce
 From Ypsilanti with ten camel loads
 Of Indian gold.

Enter a Third Messenger.

Mah.

What more?

3rd Mes.

The Christian tribes

Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
 Are in revolt.—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo,
 Tremble ;—the Arab menaces Medina ;
 The Ethiop has intrench'd himself in Sennaar,
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employ'd ;
 Who denies homage, claims investiture
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,
 Like mountain twins, that from each other's veins
 Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,
 Shake in the general fever. Through the city,
 Like birds before a storm the santons shriek,
 And prophecyings horrible and new
 Are heard among the crowd ; that sea of men
 Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
 A Dervise, learn'd in the koran, preaches
 That it is written how the sins of Islam
 Must raise up a destroyer even now.
 The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west.*

* It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a seaport near Lacedemon in an American brig. The asso-

Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,
 But in the omnipresence of that spirit
 In which all live and are. Ominous signs
 Are blazon'd broadly on the noon-day sky ;
 One saw a red cross stamp'd upon the sun ;
 It has rain'd blood; and monstrous births declare
 The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.
 The army encamp'd upon the Cydaris
 Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
 And saw two hosts conflicting in the air.—
 The shadows doubtless of the unborn time,
 Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet
 The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
 Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
 At the third watch the spirit of the plague
 Was heard abroad flapping among the tents :
 Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.
 The last news from the camp is, that a thousand
 Have sicken'd, and—

Enter Fourth Messenger.

Mah. And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
 Of some untimely rumour, speak :

4th Mes. One comes
 Fainting with toil, cover'd with foam and blood ;
 He stood, he says, upon Clelonites
 Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan
 Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters
 Then trembling in the splendor of the moon,
 When, as the wandering clouds unveil'd or hid
 Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets
 Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,
 Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
 And smoke which strangle every infant wind
 That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air
 At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco

ciation of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
 Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
 All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse
 He saw, or dream'd he saw, the Turkish admiral
 And two the loftiest of our ships of war,
 With the bright image of that queen of heaven,
 Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed !
 And the abhorred cross—

Enter an Attendant.

Atten. Your Sublime Highness,
 The Jew, who——

Mah. Could not come more seasonably ;
 Bid him attend. I'll hear no more ! Too long
 We gaze on danger through the midst of fear,
 And multiply upon our shatter'd hopes
 The images of ruin. Come what will !
 To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
 Set in our path to light us to the edge
 Through rough and smooth : nor can we suffer aught
 Which he inflicts not in whose hand we are. [*Ereunt.*
Semicho. I. Would I were the winged cloud

Of a tempest swift and loud,
 I would scorn
 The smile of morn,
 And the wave where the moon-rise is born !
 I would leave
 The spirits of eve
 A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave
 From others' threads than mine !
 Bask in the blue noon divine
 Who would, not I.

Semicho. II. Whither to fly ?

Semicho I. Where the rocks that gird the Ægean
 Echo to the battle pæan
 Of the free—
 I would flee
 A tempestuous herald of victory !
 My golden rain
 For the Grecian slain
 Should mingle in tears with the bloody main,

And my solemn thunder-knell
Should ring to the world the passing-bell
Of tyranny!

Semichio. II. Ah, King! wilt thou chain
The rack and the rain?
Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?
The storms are free,
But we—

Chorus. O slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,
Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare;
Thy touch has stamp'd these limbs with crime,
These brows thy branding garland bear;
But the free heart, the impassive soul,
Scorn the controul!

Semichio. I. Let there be light said Liberty;
And, like sunrise from the sea,
Athens arose!—Around her born,
Shone, like mountains in the morn,
Glorious states;—and are they now
Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

Semichio. II. Go
Where Thermæ and Asopus swallow'd
Persia, and the sand does foam,
Deluge upon deluge followed
Discord, Macedon, and Rome:
And, lastly, thou!

Semichio. I. Temples and towers,
Citadels and marts, and they
Who live and die there, have been ours,
And may be thine, and must decay;
But Greece and her foundation are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity;
Her citizens' imperial spirits
Rule the present from the past;
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set.

Semichio. II. Hear ye the blast,
Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
From ruin her Titanian walls?

Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones
Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth Crete,
Hear, and from the mountain thrones
The dæmons and the nymphs repeat
The harmony.

Semicho. I. I hear! I hear!

Semicho. II. The world's eyeless charioteer,
Destiny, is hurrying by!
What faith is crush'd, what empire bleeds,
Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
What eagle-winged victory sits
At her right hand? what shadow flits
Before? what splendor rolls behind?
Ruin and Renovation cry,
Who but we?

Semicho. I. I hear! I hear!

The hiss as of a rushing wind,
The roar as of an ocean foaming,
The thunder as of earthquake coming,

I hear! I hear!
The crash as of an empire falling,
The shrieks as of a people calling
Mercy! Mercy!—How they thrill;
Then a shout of "Kill! kill! kill!"
And then a small still voice, thus—

Semicho. II. For
Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind;
The foul cubs like their parents are;
Their den is in their guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with despair.

Semicho. I. In sacred Athens, near the fane
Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood;
Serve not the unknown God in vain,
But pay that broken shrine again
Love for hate, and tears for blood.

Enter MAHMUD and AHASUERUS.

Mah. Thou art a man, thou sagest, even as we—

Ahas. No more!

Mah. But raised among thy fellow men
By thought, as I by power.

Ahas.

Thou sayest so.

Mah. Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
 Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
 The flowers, and thou measurest the stars:
 Thou severest element from element;
 Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees
 The birth of this old world through all its cycles
 Of desolation and of loveliness;
 And when man was not, and how man became
 The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
 And all its narrow circles—it is much.
 I honour thee, and would be what thou art
 Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,
 Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms
 Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
 Mighty or wise. I apprehend not
 What thou hast taught me, but now I perceive
 That thou art no interpreter of dreams;
 Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
 Can make the future present—let it come!
 Moreover, thou disdainest us and ours:
 Thou art as God, whom thou contempest.

Ahas. Disdain thee!—Not the worm beneath my feet
 The Fathomless has care for meaner things
 Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
 Who would be what they may not, or would seem
 That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more
 Of thee and me, the future and the past;
 But look on that which cannot change—the one
 The unborn, and undying. Earth and ocean,
 Space, and the Isles of life or light that gem
 The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
 This firmament pavilion'd upon chaos,
 With all its cressets of immortal fire,
 Whose outwalls, bastion'd impregably
 Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this whole
 Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings
 By which they have been, are, or cease to be,

Is but a vision :—all that it inherits
 Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles, and dreams ;
 Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
 The future and the past are idle shadows
 Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being,
 Nought is but that it feels itself to be.

Mah. What meanest thou ? thy words stream like
 a tempest

Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake
 The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
 On heaven above me. What can they avail ?
 They cast on all things, surest, brightest, best,
 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

Ahas. Mistake me not ! All is contain'd in each,
 Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup.

Is that which has been or will be, to that
 Which is—the absent to the present. Thought
 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
 Reason, Imagination, cannot die ;
 They are what that which they regard appears,
 The stuff whence mutability can weave
 All that it hath dominion o'er,—worlds, worms,
 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
 To do with time, or place, or circumstance ?
 Wouldst thou behold the future ?—ask and have !
 Knock and it shall be open'd—look, and lo !
 The coming age is shadow'd on the past
 As on a glass.

Mah. Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
 My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second
 Win Stamboul ?

Ahas. Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit
 The written fortunes of thy house and faith.
 Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell
 How what was born in blood must die.

Mah. Thy words
 Have power on me ! I see—

Ahas. What hearest thou ?

Mah. A far whisper—
 Terrible silence.

Ahas. What succeeds ?

Mah. The sound*

As of the assault of an imperial city,
The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
The roar of giant cannon ;—the earthquaking
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,
The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs,
And crash of brazen mail, as of the wreck
Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,
As of a joyous infant waked and playing
With its dead mother's breast ; and now more loud
The mingled battle-cry—ha ! hear I not

ΕΥ ΤΟΥΤῶ ΝΙΚΗ. Allah, illah, Allah !

Ahas. The sulphureous mist is raised—thou seest—

Mah. A chasm,

As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul ;
And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
Like giants on the ruins of a world,
Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one
Of regal port has cast himself beneath
The steam of war. Another, proudly clad
In golden arms, spurs a Tartarian barb
Into the gap, and with his iron mace
Directs the torrent of that tide of men,
And seems—he is—Mahomet.

Ahas. What thou seest

Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream :
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold
How cities, on which empire sleeps enthroned,

* For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1445, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 223.

Bow their tower'd crests to mutability.
 Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
 Thou may'st now learn how the full tide of power
 Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,
 Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourish'd
 With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes
 Of that whose birth was but the same. The past
 Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
 Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with
 That portion of thyself which was, ere thou
 Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death;
 Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion
 Which call'd it from the uncreated deep,
 Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms
 Of raging death; and draw with mighty will
 The imperial shade hither. [Exit Ahasuerus.]

Mah.

Approach!

Phantom.

I come

Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
 To take the living than give up the dead;
 Yet has thy faith prevail'd, and I am here.
 The heavy fragments of the power which fell
 When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
 Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices
 Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
 Wailing for glory never to return.—
 A later empire nods in its decay;
 The autumn of a greener faith is come
 And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip
 The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
 Her aery, while Dominion whelp'd below.
 The storm is in its branches, and the frost
 Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
 Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
 Ruin on ruin: thou art slow, my son;
 The anarchs of the world of darkness keep
 A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies
 Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,
 Like us, shall rule the ghosts of murder'd life,
 The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—
 Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,

And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die !
 Stript of their mortal strength, as thou of thine
 Islam must fall, but we will reign together,
 Over its ruins in the world of death :—
 And, if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
 Unfold itself even in the shape of that
 Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe ! woe !
 To the weak people tangled in the grasp
 Of its last spasms.

Mah. Spirit, woe to all !
 Woe to the wrong'd and the avenger ! Woe
 To the destroyer, woe to the destroy'd !
 Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver !
 Woe to the oppress'd, and woe to the oppressor !
 Woe both to those that suffer and inflict !
 Those who are born, and those who die ! But say,
 Imperial shadow of the thing I am,
 When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
 Her consummation ?

Phan. Ask the cold pale Hour
 Rich in reversion of impending death,
 When he shall fall upon whose ripe grey hairs
 Sit care, and sorrow, and infirmity—
 The weight which crime, whose wings are plumed with
 years,
 Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
 Over the heads of men, under which burthen
 They bow themselves unto the grave ; fond wretch !
 He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years
 To come, and how in hours of youth renew'd
 He will renew lost joys, and—

Voice without. Victory ! victory !
 [*The phantom vanishes.*]

Mah. What sound of the importunate earth has broken
 My mighty trance ?

Voice without. Victory ! victory !

Mah. Weak lightning before darkness ! poor faint
 smile

Of dying Islam ! Voice which art the response
 Of hollow weakness ! Do I wake and live ?
 Were there such things ? or may the unquiet brain,

Vex'd by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
 Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear ?
 It matters not !—for nought we see or dream,
 Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
 More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,
 The future must become the past, and I,
 As they were, to whom once this present hour,
 'This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
 Seem'd an Elysian isle of peace and joy
 Never to be attain'd.—I must rebuke
 This drunkenness of triumph ere it die.
 And, dying, bring despair.—Victory !—poor slaves !

[*Exit Mahmud.*]

Voice without. Shout in the jubilee of death ! The
 Greeks

Are as a brood of lions in the net,
 Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
 Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
 Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death,
 From Thule to the girdle of the world,
 Come, feast ! the board of groans with the flesh of men—
 The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,
 Famine and thirst await :—eat, drink, and die !

Semich. I. Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,
 Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day !

I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
 Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
 Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilion'd lay
 In visions of the dawning undelight.

Who shall impede her flight ?

Who rob her of her prey ?

Voice without Victory ! victory ! Russia's famish'd
 eagles

Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
 Impale the remnant of the Greeks ! despoil !
 Violate ! make their flesh cheaper than dust !

Semich. II. Thou voice which art

The herald of the ill in splendor hid !

Thou echo of the hollow heart

Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode

When desolation flashes o'er a world destroy'd.

O hear me to those isles of jagged cloud
 Which float like mountains on the earthquakes, 'mid
 The momentary oceans of the lightning ;
 Or to some toppling promontory proud
 Of solid tempest, whose black pyramid,
 Riven, overhangs the founts intensely brightening
 Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire
 Before their waves expire,
 When heaven and earth are light, and only light
 In the thunder-night !
Voice without Victory ! Victory ! Austria, Russia,
 England,

And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
 Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak !
 Ho, there ! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes !
 These chains are light, fitter for slaves and prisoners
 Than Greeks. Kill ! plunder ! burn ! let none remain.

Semichio. I. Alas for Liberty !

If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years

Of fate, can quell the free ;

Alas for Virtue ! when

Torments, or contumely, or the sneers

Of erring-judging men

Can break the heart where it abides.

Alas ! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure more
 splendid,

Can change, with its false times and tides,

Like hope and terror—

Alas for Love !

And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,

If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror

Before the dazzled eyes of error.

Alas for thee ! Image of the above.

Semichio. II. Repulse, with plumes from conquest
 torn,

Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn

Through many a hostile Anarchy !

At length they wept aloud and cried, " The sea ' the
 sea : "

Through exile, persecution, and despair,

Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become

The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb,
Of all whose step wakes power, lull'd in her savage lair
But Greece was as a hermit child,

Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
To woman's growth by dreams so mild,
She knew not pain nor guilt;

And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble,
When ye desert the free!

If Greece must be

A wreck, yet shall its fragments re-assemble,
And build themselves again impregnable

In a diviner clime,

To Amphionic music, on some cape sublime,
Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

Semicho. I. Let the tyrants rule the desert they have
made;

Let the free possess the Paradise they claim;
Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weigh'd

With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

Semicho. II. Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,

Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,

Our adversity a dream to pass away—

Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!

Voice without. Victory! Victory! The bought Briton
sends

The keys of ocean to the Islamite.

Nor shall the blazon of the cross be veil'd,

And British skill directing Othman might,

Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh keep holy

This jubilee of unrevenged blood!

Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

Semicho. I. Darkness has dawn'd in the East

On the noon of time:

The death-birds descend to their feast

From the hungry clime.

Let Freedom and Peace flee far

To a sunnier strand,

And follow Love's folding star

To the evening land!

Semicho. II. The young moon has fed

Her exhausted horn

With the sunset's fire ;
 The weak day is dead,
 But the night is not born ; [sire
 And, like loveliness panting with wild de-
 While it trembles with fear and delight,
 Hesperus flies from awakening might.
 And pants in its beauty and speed with light
 Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.
 Thou beacon of love ! thou lamp of the free !
 Guide us far, far away,
 To climes where now, veil'd by the ardour of day,
 Thou art hidden

From waves on which weary Noon
 Faints in her summer swoon,
 Between kingless continents, sinless as Eden,
 Around mountains and islands inviolably
 Prankt on the sapphire sea.

Semichor. I. Through the sunset of hope,
 Like the shapes of a dream,
 What Paradise islands of glory gleam
 Beneath Heaven's cope.

Their shadows more clear float by—
 The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe,
 Burst like morning on dreams, or like Heaven on
 death,

Through the walls of our prison ;
 And Greece, which was dead, is arisen !

Cho. The world's great age begins anew,

The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn :

Heaven smiled, and faiths and empires gleam
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far ;
 A new Peneus rolls its fountains
 Against the morning-star.

Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads, on a sunnier deep ;
 A loftier Argos cleaves the main,

Fraught with a later prize ;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.
Oh write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be !
Nor mix with Lalan rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free :
Although a subtle sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew,
Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendor of its prime ;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.
Saturn and Love their long repose
Shall burst, more wise and good
Than all who fell, than one who rose,
Than many unwithstood—
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers
But native tears, and symbol flowers.
Oh cease ! must hate and death return ?
Cease ! must men kill and die ?
Cease ! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past—
Oh might it die or rest at last !

END OF HELLAS

JULIAN AND MADDALO;

A CONVERSATION.

I rode one evening with Count Maddalo
 Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow
 Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand
 Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,
 Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,
 Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,
 Is this; an uninhabited sea-side,
 Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,
 Abandons; and no other object breaks
 The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes
 Broken and unrepared, and the tide makes
 A narrow space of level sand thereon,
 Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down:
 This ride was my delight. I love all waste
 And solitary places; where we taste
 The pleasure of believing what we see
 Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
 And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
 More barren than its billows; and yet more
 Than all, with a remembered friend I love
 To ride as then I rode;—for the winds drove
 The living spray along the sunny air
 Into our faces: the blue heavens were bare,
 Stripped to their depths by the awakening north;
 And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth
 Harmonizing with solitude, and sent
 Into our hearts aerial merriment.
 So, as we rode, we talked; and the swift thought,
 Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,
 But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours,

Charged with light memories of remembered hours,
None slow enough for sadness: till we came
Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.
This day had been cheerful but cold, and now
The sun was sinking, and the wind also.
Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be
Talk interrupted with such raillery
As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn
The thoughts it would extinguish:—'twas forlorn,
Yet pleasing; such as once, so poets tell,
The devils held within the dales of hell,
Concerning God, freewill, and destiny.
Of all that Earth has been, or yet may be;
All that vain men imagine or believe,
Or hope can paint, or suffering can achieve,
We descanted; and I (for ever still
Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)
Argued against despondency; but pride
Made my companion take the darker side.
The sense that he was greater than his kind
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind
By gazing on its own exceeding light.
Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight
Over the horizon of the mountains—Oh!
How beautiful is sunset, when the glow
Of heaven descends upon a land like thee,
Thou paradise of exiles, Italy!
Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers
Of cities they encircle!—It was ours
To stand on thee, beholding it: and then,
Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men
Were waiting for us with the gondola.
As those who pause on some delightful way,
Tho' bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood,
Looking upon the evening and the flood,
Which lay between the city and the shore,
Paved with the image of the sky: the hoar
And airy Alps, toward the north, appeared,
Thro' mist, a heaven-sustaining bulwark, reared
Between the east and west; and half the sky
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,

Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
Down the steep west into a wondrous hue
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
Among the many-folded hills—they were
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,
As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles,
The likeness of a clump of peaked isles—
And then, as if the earth and sea had been
Dissolved in to one lake of fire, were seen
Those mountains towering, as from waves of flame,
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
Their very peaks transparent. "Ere it fade,"
Said my companion, "I will show you soon
A better station." So, o'er the lagoon
We glided; and from that funereal bark
I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark
How from their many isles in evening's gleam,
Its temples and its palaces did seem
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to heav'n.
I was about to speak, when—"We are even
Now at the point I meant," said Maddalo,
And bade the gondolieri cease to row.
"Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell"
I looked, and saw between us and the sun
A building on an island, such a one
As age to age might add, for uses vile,—
A windowless, deformed, and dreary pile;
And on the top an open tower, where hung
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung.
We could just hear its coarse and iron tongue:
The broad sun sank behind it, and it tolled
In strong and black relief.—"What we behold
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,"—
Said Maddalo; "and even at this hour,
Those who may cross the water hear that bell
Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell,
To vespers."—"As much skill as need to pray,
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they,

To their stern maker," I replied.—" O, ho!
You talk as in years past," said Maddalo.
" 'Tis strange men change not. You were ever still
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,
A wolf for the meek lambs: if you can't swim,
Beware of providence." I looked on him,
But the gay smile had faded from his eye.
" As such," he cried, " is our mortality;
And this must be the emblem and the sign
Of what should be eternal and divine;
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,
Hung in a heav'n-illumined tower must toll
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below
Round the rent heart, and pray—as madmen do.
For what? they know not, till the night of death,
As sunset that strange vision, severeth
Our memory from itself, and us from all
We sought, and yet were baffled." I recall
The sense of what he said, although I mar
The force of his expressions. The broad stair
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill;
And the black bell became invisible;
And the red tower looked grey; and all between,
The churches, ships, and palaces, were seen
Huddled in gloom; into the purple sea
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.
We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola
Conveyed me to my lodging by the way.

The following morn was rainy, cold, and dim:
Ere Maddalo arose I called on him,
And whilst I waited with his child I played;
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made;
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being;
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing;
With eyes—Oh! speak not of her eyes! which seem
Twin Mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam
With such deep meaning as we never see
But in the human countenance. With me
She was a special favourite: I had nursed
Her fine and feeble limbs, when she came first

To this bleak world ; and yet she seemed to know
 On second sight her ancient playfellow,
 Less changed than she was by six months or so.
 For, after her first shyness was worn out,
 We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,
 When the Count entered. Salutations pass'd :
 "The words you spoke last night might well have cast
 A darkness on my spirit:—if man be
 The passive thing you say, I should not see
 Much harm in the religions and old saws,
 (Tho' I may never own such leaden laws)
 Which break a teachless nature to the yoke :
 Mine is another faith."—Thus much I spoke,
 And, noting he replied not, added—" See
 This lovely child ; blithe, innocent, and free ;
 She spends a happy time, with little care ;
 While we to such sick thoughts subjected are,
 As came on you last night. It is our will
 Which thus enchains us to permitted ill.
 We might be otherwise ; we might be all
 We dream of, happy, high, majestic.
 Where is the beauty, love, and truth, we seek,
 But in our minds ? And, if we were not weak,
 Should we be less in deed than in desire ?"—
 —" Aye, if we were not weak,—and we aspire,
 How vainly ! to be strong," said Maddalo :
 "You talk Utopian"—

"It remains to know,"

I then rejoined, " and those who try, may find
 How strong the chains are which our spirit bind :
 Brittle perchance as straw We are assured
 Much may be conquered, much may be endured,
 Of what degrades and crushes us. We know
 That we have power over ourselves to do
 And suffer—*what*, we know not till we try ;
 But something nobler than to live and die :
 So taught the kings of old philosophy,
 Who reigned before religion made men blind ;
 And those who suffer with their suffering kind,
 Yet feel this faith, religion "

"My dear friend,"

Said Maddalo, "my judgment will not bend
To your opinion, though I think you might
Make such a system refutation-tight,
As far as words go. I knew one like you,
Who to this city came some months ago,
With whom I argued in this sort,—and he
Is now gone mad—and so he answered me,
Poor fellow!—But if you would like to go,
We'll visit him, and his wild talk will shew
How vain are such aspiring theories."—

"I hope to prove the induction otherwise,
And that a want of that true theory still,
Which seeks a soul of goodness in things ill,
Or in himself or others, has thus bow'd
His being:—there are some by nature proud,
Who, patient in all else, demand but this—
To love and be beloved with gentleness:—
And being scorned, what wonder if they die
Some living death? This is not destiny,
But man's own wilful ill."

As thus I spoke,
Servants announced the gondola, and we
Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea
Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.
We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,
Fierce yells and howlings, and lamentings keen,
And laughter where complaint had merrier been,
Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs
Into an old court-yard. I heard on high,
Then, fragments of most touching melody,
But looking up saw not the singer there.—
Thro' the black bars in the tempestuous air
I saw, like weeds on a wreck'd palace growing,
Long tangled locks flung wildly forth and flowing,
Of those on a sudden who were beguiled
Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled,
Hearing sweet sounds. Then I:—

"Methinks there were
A cure of these with patience and kind care,

If music can thus move. But what is he,
Whom we seek here?"

"Of his sad history
I know but this," said Maddalo: "he came
To Venice a dejected man, and fame
Said he was wealthy, or he had been so.
Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe,
But he was ever talking in such sort
As you do,—but more sadly;—he seem'd hurt,
Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,
To hear but of the oppression of the strong,
Or those absurd deceits (I think with you
In some respects, you know) which carry thro'
The excellent impostors of this earth
When they outface detection. He had worth,
Poor fellow! but a humourist in his way."—
—"Alas, what drove him mad!"

"I cannot say:
A lady came with him from France, and when
She left him and returned, he wander'd then
About yon lonely isles of desert sand,
Till he grew wild. He had no cash nor land
Remaining:—the police had brought him here—
Some fancy took him, and he would not bear
Removal, so I fitted up for him
Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim;
And sent him busts, and books, and urns for flowers,
Which had adorned his life in happier hours,
And instruments of music. You may guess
A stranger could do little more or less
For one so gentle and unfortunate—
And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight
From madmen's chains, and make this hell appear
A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear."

"Nay, this was kind of you,—he had no claim,
As the world says."

"None but the very same
Which I on all mankind, were I, as he,
Fall'n to such deep reverse. His melody

Is interrupted now: we hear the din
Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin:
Let us now visit him: after this strain,
He ever communes with himself again,
And sees and hears not any."

Having said
These words, we called the keeper, and he led
To an apartment opening on the sea—
There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully
Near a piano, his pale fingers twined
One with the other; and the ooze and wind
Rushed thro' an open casement, and did sway
His hair, and started it with the brackish spray:
His head was leaning on a music-book,
And he was muttering; and his lean limbs shook;
His lips were pressed against a folded leaf,
In hue too beautiful for health, and grief
Smiled in their motions as they lay apart,
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart
The eloquence of passion: soon he raised
His sad meek face, and eyes lustrous and glazed,
And spoke,—sometimes as one who wrote and thought
His words might move some heart that heeded not,
If sent to distant lands;—and then as one
Reproaching deeds never to be undone,
With wondering self-compassion: then his speech
Was lost in grief, and then his words came each
Unmodulated and expressionless,—
But that from one jarred accent yon might guess
It was despair made them so uniform:
And all the while the loud and gusty storm
Hissed thro' the window, and we stood behind,
Stealing his accents from the envious wind,
Unseen. I yet remember what he said
Distinctly, such impression his words made.

"Month after month," he cried, "to bear this load,
And, as a jade urged by the whip and goad,
To drag life on—which like a heavy chain
Lengthens behind with many a link of pain,
And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare

To give a human voice to my despair ;
But live, and move, and, wretched thing . smile on,
As if I never went aside to groan,
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those
Who are most dear—not for my own repose—
Alas ! no scorn, nor pain, nor hate, could be
So heavy as that falsehood is to me—
But that I cannot bear more altered faces
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,
More misery, disappointment, and mistrust,
To own me for their father. Would the dust
Were covered in upon my body now !
That the life ceased to toil within my brow !
And then these thoughts would at the last be fled :
Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

“ What Power delights to torture us ? I know
That to myself I do not wholly owe
What now I suffer, though in part I may.
Alas ! none strewed fresh flowers upon the way
Where, wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain,
My shadow, which will leave me not again.
If I have erred, there was no joy in error,
But pain, and insult, and unrest, and terror ;
I have not, as some do, bought penitence
With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence ;
For then if love, and tenderness, and truth,
Had overlived Hope’s momentary youth,
My creed should have redeemed me from repenting :
But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting
Met love excited by far other seeming
Until the end was gained :—as one from dreaming
Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state
Such as it is,—

“ O thou, my spirit’s mate !
Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,
Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes
If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see,
My secret groans must be unheard by thee,
Thou wouldst weep tears, bitter as blood, to know
Thy lost friend’s incommunicable woe.

Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed
 In friendship, let me not that name degrade,
 By placing on your hearts the secret load
 Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road
 To peace, and that is truth, which follow ye !
 Love sometimes leads astray to misery.
 Yet think not, tho' subdued (and I may well
 Say that I am subdued)—that the full hell
 Within me would infect the untainted breast
 Of sacred nature with its own unrest ;
 As some perverted beings think to find
 In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind
 Which scorn or hate hath wounded.—O, how vain
 The dagger heals not, but may rend again.
 Believe that I am ever still the same
 In creed as in resolve ; and what may tame
 My heart, must leave the understanding free
 Or all would sink under this agony —
 Nor dream that I will join the vulgar eye,
 Or with my silence sanction tyranny,
 Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain
 In any madness which the world calls gain ;
 Ambition, or revenge, or thoughts as stern
 As those which make me what I am, or turn
 To avarice or misanthropy or lust.
 Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust !
 'Till then the dungeon may demand its prey ;
 And Poverty and Shame may meet and say,
 Halting beside me, in the public way,—
 'That love-devoted youth is ours : let's sit
 Beside him : he may live some six months yet.'—
 Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,
 May ask some willing victim ; or ye, friends,
 May fall under some sorrow, which this heart
 Or hand may share, or vanquish, or avert :
 I am prepared, in truth, with no proud joy,
 To do or suffer aught, as when a boy
 I did devote to justice, and to love,
 My nature, worthless now.

" I must remove
 A veil from my penit mind. 'Tis torn aside !

O! pallid as Death's dedicated bride,
 Thou mockery which art sitting by my side.
 Am I not wan like thee? At the grave's call
 I haste, invited to thy wedding-hall,
 To meet the ghastly paramour, for whom
 Thou hast deserted me,—and made the tomb
 Thy bridal bed. But I beside thy feet
 Will lie, and watch ye from my winding-sheet.
 Thus—wide awake tho' dead—Yet stay, O, stay!
 Go not so soon—I know not what I say—
 Hear but my reasons—I am mad, I fear,
 My fancy is o'erwrought—thou art not here.
 Pale art thou, 'tis most true—but thou art gone—
 Thy work is finished; I am left alone.

“Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast,
 Which like a serpent thou envenomest
 As in repayment of the warmth it lent?
 Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?
 Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought
 That thou wert she who said ‘You kiss me not
 Ever; I fear you do not love me now.’
 In truth I loved even to my overthrow
 Her, who would fain forget these words, but they
 Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

“You say that I am proud; that when I speak,
 My lip is tortured with the wrongs, which break
 The spirit it expresses.—Never one
 Humbled himself before, as I have done!
 Even the instinctive worm on which we tread
 Turns, tho' it wound not—then, with prostrate head,
 Sinks in the dust, and writhes like me—and dies:
 —No:—wears a living death of agonies!
 As the slow shadows of the pointed grass
 Mark the eternal periods, its pangs pass,
 Slow, ever-moving, making moments be
 As mine seem,—each an immortality!

“That you had never seen me! never heard
 My voice! and, more than all, had ne'er endured

The deep pollution of my loathed embrace!
That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face!
That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out
The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root
With mine own quivering fingers! so that ne'er
Our hearts had for a moment mingled there,
To disunite in horror! These were not
With the like some suppressed and hideous thought,
Which flits athwart our musings, but can find
No rest within a pure and gentle mind—
Thou seal'dst them with many a bare broad word,
And sear'dst my memory o'er them,—for I heard
And can forget not—they were ministered,
One after one, those curses. Mix them up
Like self-destroying poisons in one cup;
And they will make one blessing, which thou ne'er
Didst imprecate for on me—death!

“It were

A cruel punishment for one most cruel,
If such can love, to make that love the fuel
Of the mind's hell—hate, scorn, remorse, despair;
But *me*, whose heart a stranger's tear might wear,
As water-drops the sandy fountain stone;
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
For woes which others hear not, and could see
The absent with the glass of phantasy,
And near the poor and trampled sit and weep,
Following the captive to his dungeon deep;
Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth,
And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,
When all beside was cold:—that thou on me
Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony—
Such curses are from lips once eloquent
With love's too partial praise! Let none relent
Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name
Henceforth, if an example for the same
They seek: for thou on me lookedst so and so,
And didst speak thus and thus. I live to shew
How much men bear, and die not.

• •

"Thou wilt tell,

With the grimace of hate, how horrible
It was to meet my love when thine grew less;
Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address
Such features to love's work.... This taunt, tho' true,
(For indeed nature nor in form nor hue
Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)
Shall not be thy defence: for since thy life
Met mine first, years long past,—since thine eye kindled
With soft fire under mine,—I have not dwindled,
Nor changed in mind, or body, or in ought
But as love changes what it loveth not
After long years and many trials.

"How vain

Are words! I thought never to speak again,
Not even in secret, not to my own heart—
But from my lips the unwilling accents start,
And from my pen the words flow as I write,
Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears—my sight
Is dim to see that charactered in vain,
On this unfeeling leaf, which burns the brain
And eats into it blotting all things fair,
And wise and good, which time had written there.
Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
The work of their own hearts, and that must be
Our chastisement or recompence.—O child!
I would that thine were like to be more mild
For both our wretched sakes,—for thine the most
Who feel'st already all that thou hast lost,
Without the power to wish it thine again.
And, as slow years pass, a funereal train,
Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend
Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend
No thought on my dead memory?

"Alas, love:

Fear me not: against thee I'd not move
A finger in despite. Do I not live
That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve?
I give thee tears for scorn, and love for hate;

And, that thy lot may be less desolate
Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain
From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain
Then—when thou speakest of me—never say,
'He could forgive not.'—Here I cast away
All human passions, all revenge, all pride;
I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide
Under these words, like embers, every spark
Of that which has consumed me. Quick and dark
The grave is yawning:—as its roof shall cover
My limbs with dust and worms, under and over,
So let oblivion hide this grief—The air
Closes upon my accents, as despair
Upon my heart—let death upon my care!"

He ceased, and overcome, leant back awhile;
Then rising, with a melancholy smile,
Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept
A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept,
And muttered some familiar name, and we
Wept without shame in his society.
I think I never was impress'd so much;
The man, who was not, must have lack'd a touch
Of human nature.—Then we linger'd not,
Although our argument was quite forgot;
But, calling the attendants, went to dine
At Maddalo's:—yet neither cheer, nor wine,
Could give us spirits, for we talked of him,
And nothing else, till day-light made stars dim.
And we agreed it was some dreadful ill
Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,
By a dear friend; some deadly change in love
Of one vow'd deeply which he dream'd not of;
For whose sake, he it seemed, had fixed a blot
Of falsehood in his mind, which flourish'd not
But in the light of all-beholding truth;
And having stamped this canker on his youth,
She had abandoned him:—and how much more
Might be his woe, we guessed not:—he had store
Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess
From his nice habits and his gentleness:

These now were lost—it were a grief indeed
If he had changed one unsustaining reed
For all that such a man might else adorn.
The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn ;
For the wild language of his grief was high—
Such as in measure were called poetry.
And I remember one remark, which then
Maddalo made: he said—"Most wretched men
Are cradled into poetry by wrong:
They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

If I had been an unconnected man,
I, from this moment, should have form'd some plan
Never to leave sweet Venice: for to me
It was delight to ride by the lone sea:
And then the town is silent—one may write
Or read in gondolas, by day or night,
Having the little brazen lamp alight,
Unseen, uninterrupted:—books are there,
Pictures, and casts from all those statutes fair
Which were twin-born with poetry:—and all
We seek in towns, with little to recal
Regret for the green country:—I might sit
In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit
And subtle talk would cheer the winter night,
And make me know myself:—and the fire light
Would flash upon our faces, till the day
Might dawn, and make me wonder at my stay.
But I had friends in London too. The chief
Attraction here was that I sought relief
From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought
Within me—'twas perhaps an idle thought,
But I imagined that if, day by day,
I watched him, and seldom went away,
And studied all the beatings of his heart
With zeal, as men study some stubborn art
For their own good, and could by patience find
An entrance to the caverns of his mind,
I might reclaim him from his dark estate.
In friendships I had been most fortunate,
Yet never saw I one whom I would call

More willingly my friend :—and this was all
 Accomplish'd not ;—such dreams of baseless good
 Oft come and go, in crowds or solitude,
 And leave no trace !—but what I now design'd,
 Made, for long years, impression on my mind.
 —The following morning, urged by my affairs,
 I left bright Venice.—

After many years,
 And many changes, I returned ; the name
 Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same,
 But Maddalo was travelling, far away,
 Among the mountains of Armenia.
 His dog was dead ; his child had now become
 A woman, such as it has been my doom
 To meet with few ; a wonder of this earth,
 Where there is little of transcendent worth,—
 Like one of Shakespeare's women. Kindly she,
 And with a manner beyond courtesy,
 Receiv'd her father's friend ; and, when I ask'd
 Of the lorn maniac, she her memory task'd,
 And told, as she had heard, the mournful tale :
 " That the poor sufferer's health began to fail
 Two years from my departure ; but that then
 The lady, who had left him, came again.
 Her mien had been imperious, but she now
 Look'd meek ; perhaps remorse had brought her low.
 Her coming made him better ; and they stayed
 Together at my father's,—for I played,
 As I remember, with the lady's shawl ;
 I might be six years old :—But, after all,
 She left him."—

" Why, her heart must have been tough,
 How did it end ! "

" And was not this enough ?
 They met, they parted "

" Child, is there no more ? "

" Something within that interval, which bore
 The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met ;—

Yet, if thine aged eyes disdain to wet
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remember'd tears,
Ask me no more ; but let the silent years
Be clos'd and cer'd over their memory,
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie "
I urged and questioned still : she told me how
All happen'd—but the cold world shall not know.
Rome, May, 1819.



THE WITCH OF ATLAS

—

Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth
Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,
Error and Truth, had hunted from the earth
All those bright natures which adorned its prime,
And left us nothing to believe in, worth
The pains of putting into learned rhyme,
A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain,
Within a cavern by a secret fountain.

Her mother was one of the Atlantides:

The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden
In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas
So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden
In the warm shadow of her loveliness ;—

He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden
The chamber of grey rock in which she lay—
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

'Tis said, she was first changed into a vapour,
And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,
Like splendour-winged moths about a taper,
Round the red west when the sun dies in it—
And then into a meteor, such as caper

On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit ;
Then, into one of those mysterious stars
Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent
Her bow beside the folding star, and bidden
With that bright sign the billows to indent
The sea-deserted sand : like children chidden,
At her command they ever came and went :—
Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden,
Took shape and motion : with the living form
Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.

A lovely lady garmented in light
From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are
Two openings of unfathomable night
Seen through a tempest's cloven roof—her hair
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,
Picturing her form ; her soft smiles shone afar,
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew
All living things towards this wonder new.

And first the spotted camel-leopard came,
And then the wise and fearless elephant ;
Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame
Of his own volumes interwolved ;—all gaunt
And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.
They drank before her at her sacred fount ;
And every beast of beating heart grew bold,
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

The brindled lioness led forth her young,
That she might teach them how they should forego
Their inborn thirst of death ; the pard unstrung
His sinews at her feet, and sought to know
With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue
How he might be as gentle as the doe.
The magic circle of her voice and eyes
All savage natures did imparadise.

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick
Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew
Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick,
Cicadæ are, drunk with the noonday dew :
And Driope and Faunus followed quick,
Teazing the god to sing them something new.

Till in this cave they found the lady lone,
Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,
And though none saw him,—through the adamant
Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air,
And through those living spirits, like a want
He pass'd out of his everlasting lair
Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,
And felt that wondrous lady all alone,—
And she felt him upon her emerald throne.

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,
And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,
Who drives her white waves over the green sea ;
And Ocean, with the brine on his grey locks,
And quaint Priapus with his company
All came, much wondering how the enwombed rocks
Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth ;—
Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,
And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant—
These spirits shook within them, as a flame
Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt :
Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,
Centaur, and Satyr, and such shapes as haunt
Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead,
Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

For she was beautiful : her beauty made
The bright world dim, and every thing beside
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade :
No thought of living spirit could abide,
Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,
On any object in the world so wide,
On any hope within the circling skies,
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle
And twined three threads of fleecy mist and three
Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle
The clouds, and waves and mountains with, and sh.

As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle
In the belated moon, wound skillfully ;
And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—
A shadow for the splendour of her love.

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling
Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,
Folded in cells of crystal silence there ;
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
Will never die—yet ere we are aware,
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,
And the regret they leave remains alone.

And there lay visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,
Each in his thin sheath like a crystalis :
Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint
With the soft burthen of intensest bliss :
It is its work to bear to many a saint
Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,
Even Love's—and others white, green, grey and black,
And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

And odours, in a kind of aviary
Of ever blooming Eden trees she kept,
Clipt in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy
Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept,
As bats at the wired window of a dairy,
They beat their vans ; and each was an adept,
When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds,
To stir sweet thoughts, or sad, in destined minds.

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might
Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,
And change eternal death into a night
Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep,
Could make their tears all wonder and delight,
She in her crystal vials did closely keep :
If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said
The living were not envied of the dead.

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,
The works of some Saturnian Archimago,

Which taught the expiations at whose price
Men from the gods might win that happy age
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;
And which might quench the earth-consuming rage
Of gold and blood—till men should live and move
Harmonious as the sacred stars above.

And how all things that seem untameable,
Not to be checked and not to be confined,
Obey the spells of wisdom's wizard skill;
Time, Earth, and Fire—the Ocean and the Wind,
And all their shapes—and man's imperial will;
And other scrolls whose writings did unbind
The inmost lore of Love—let the profane
Tremble to ask what secrets they contain.

And wondrous works of substances unknown,
To which the enchantment of her father's power
Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,
Were heaped in the recesses of her bower;
Carved lamps and chalices, and phials which shone
In their own golden beams—each like a flower,
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light
Under a cypress in a starless night.

At first she lived alone in this wild home,
And her thoughts were each a minister,
Clothing themselves, or with the ocean-foam,
Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,
To work whatever purposes might come
Into her mind: such power her mighty Sire
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,
Oreads and Naiads with long weedy locks,
Offered to do her bidding through the seas,
Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,
And in the gnarled heart of stubborn oaks,
So they might live for ever in the light
Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

" This may not be," the wizard maid replied ;

" The fountains where the Naiades bedew
Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried ;

The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide ;

The boundless ocean, like a drop of dew
Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

" And ye with them will perish one by one :

If I must sigh to think that this shall be,

If I must weep when the surviving Sun

Shall smile on your decay—Oh, ask not me
To love you till your little race is run ;

I cannot die as ye must—over me
Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so farewell !"

She spoke and wept: the dark and azure well

Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,

And every little circlet where they fell,

Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres
And intertangled lines of light :—a knell

Of sobbing voices came upon her ears
From those departing Forms, o'er the serene
Of the white streams and of the forest green

All day the wizard lady sat aloof,

Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity
Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof ;

Or broidering the pictured poesy
Of some high tale upon her growing woof,
Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye
In hues outshining heaven—and ever she
Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece

Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon ;

Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is,

Each flame of it is as a precious stone

Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this

Belongs to each and all who gaze upon

The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand
She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

This lady never slept, but lay in trance
All night within the fountain—as in sleep.
Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance:
Through the green splendour of the water deep
She saw the constellations reel and dance
Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep
The tenor of her contemplations calm,
With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

And when the worldwinds and the clouds descended
From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,
She pass'd at dewfall to a space extended,
Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel
Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,
There yawned an inextinguishable well
Of crimson fire, full even to the brim,
And overflowing all the margin trim.

Within the which she lay, when the fierce war
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor
In many a mimic moon and bearded star,
O'er woods and lawns—the serpent heard it flicker
In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar—
And when the windless snow descended thicker
Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came,
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

She had a Boat which some say Vulcan wrought
For venus, as the chariot of her star;
But it was found too feeble to be fraught
With all the ardours in that sphere which are,
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought
And gave it to this daughter: from a car
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

And others say, that, when but three hours old,
The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,
And like an horticultural adept,

Stole a strange seed, and wrapt it up in mould,
And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

The plant grew strong and green—the snowy flower
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began
To turn the light and dew by inward power
To its own substance: woven tracery ran
Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er
The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan,
Of which Love scooped this boat, and with soft motion
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit
A living spirit within all its frame,
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it.
Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit;
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame,
Or on blind Homer's heart a winged thought,—
In joyous expectation lay the boat.

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow
Together, tempering the repugnant mass
With liquid love—all things together grow
Through which the harmony of love can pass;
And a fair shape out of her hands did flow
A living Image, which did far surpass
In beauty that bright shape of vital stone
Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth
It seemed to have developed no defect
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—
In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked;
The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth,
The countenance was such as might select
Some artist that his skill should never die,
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,
Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,

Tipt with the speed of liquid lightnings,
Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere :
She led her creature to the boiling springs
Where the light boat was moored,—and said—“ Sit
here !”

And pointed to the prow, and took her seat
Beside the rudder with opposing feet.

And down the streams which clove those mountains vast
Around their inland islets, and amid
The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast
Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid
In melancholy gloom, the pinnace pass'd,
By many a star-surrounded pyramid
Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,
And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

The silver noon into that winding dell,
With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,
Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell ;
A green and glowing light, like that which drops
From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,
When earth, over her face night's mantle wraps ;
Between the severed mountains lay on high
Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky.

And ever as she went, the Image lay
With folded wings and unawakened eyes ,
And o'er its gentle countenance did play
The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,
Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay.
And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sigh
Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,
They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud
Upon a stream of wind, the pinnace went :
Now lingering on the pools, in which abode
The calm and darkness of the deep content
In which they paused ; now o'er the shallow road
Of white and dancing waters all besprent
With sand and polished pebbles :—mortal boat
In such a shallow rapid could not float

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver
Their snow-like waters into golden air,
Or under chasms unfathomable ever
Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear
A subterranean portal for the river,
It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear
Its fall, down the hoar precipice of spray,
Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

And when the wizard lady would ascend
The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,
Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—
She called “Hermaphroditus!” and the pale
And heavy hue which slumber could extend
Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale
A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,
Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,
With stars of fire spotting the stream below ;
And from above into the Sun’s dominions
Flinging a glory, like the golden glow
In which spring clothes her emerald-winged minions,
All interwoven with fine feathery snow
And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,
With which frost paints the pines in winter time.

And then it winnowed the Elysian air
Which ever hung about that lady bright,
With its ethereal vans—and speeding there,
Like a star up the torrent of the night,
Or a swift eagle in the morning glare
Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight ;
The pinnacle, oared by those enchanted wings,
Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

The water flashed like sunlight, by the prow
Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven ;
The still air seemed as if its waves did flow
In tempest down the mountains,—loosely driven :
The lady’s radiant hair streamed to and fro
Beneath the billows, having vainly striven

Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel
The swift and steady motion of the keel.

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,
Or, in the noon of interlunar night,
The lady-witch in visions could not chain
Her spirit; but sailed forth under the light
Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain
His storm-outspeeding wings, th' Hermaphrodite
She to the Austral waters took her way,
Beyond the fabulous Thamondocona.

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,
Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,
With the Antarctic constellations haven,
Canopus and his crew, lay th' Austral lake—
There she would build herself a windless haven
Out of the clouds, whose moving turrets make
The bastions of the storm, when through the sky
The spirits of the tempest thundered by.

A haven, beneath whose translucent floor
The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,
And around which, the solid vapours hoar,
Based on the level waters, to the sky
Lifted their dreadful crags; and like a shore
Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly
Hemmed in with rifts and precipices grey,
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash
Of the winds' scourge, foamed like a wounded thing;
And the incessant hail with stony clash
Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing
Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash
Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering
Fragment of inky thunder smoke—this haven
Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,

On which that lady played her many pranks,
Circling the image of a shooting star,
Even as a tyger on Hydaspes' banks
Outspeeds the Antelopes, which speediest are,

In her light boat ; and many quips and cranks
She played upon the water ; till the car
Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan,
To journey from the misty east began.

And then she called out of the hollow turrets
Of those high clouds, white, golden, and vermillion,
The armies of her ministering spirits—
In mighty legions, million after million
They came, each troop emblazoning its merits
On meteor flags ; and many a proud pavilion,
Of the intertexture of the atmosphere,
They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen
Of woven exhalations, underlaid
With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen
A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid
With crimson silk—cressets from the serene
Hung there, and on the water for her tread,
A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,
Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught
Upon those wandering isles of æry dew,
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,
She sate, and heard all that had happened new
Between the earth and moon, since they had brought
The last intelligence—and now she grew
Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—
And now she wept, and now she laughed outright

These were tame pleasuses.—She would often climb
The steepest ladder of the crudded rack
Up to some beaked cape of cloud sublime,
And like Arion on the dolphin's back
Ride singing through the shoreless air. Oft time
Following the serpent lightning's winding track,
She ran upon the platforms of the wind,
And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

And sometimes to those streams of upper air,
Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round,

She would ascend, and win the spirits there,
To let her join their chorus. Mortals found
That on those days the sky was calm and fair,
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound
Wandered upon the earth where'er she pass'd,
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,
To glide adown old Nilus, when he threads
Egypt and Æthiopia, from the steep
Of utmost Axumé, until he spreads,
Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,
His waters on the plain : and crested heads
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

By Mæris and the Mareotid lakes,
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,
Where naked boys, bridling tame water-snakes,
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes
Of those huge forms :—within the brazen doors
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

And where, within the surface of the river,
The shadows of the massy temples lie,
And never are erased—but tremble ever
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever
The works of man pierced that serenest sky
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight
To wander in the shadow of the night.

With motion, like the spirit of that wind
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet
Past through the peopled haunts of human kind,
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,
Through fane and palace-court and labyrinth mined
With many a dark and subterranean street
Under the Nile ; through chambers high and deep
She past, observing mortals in their sleep.

A pleasure sweet, doubtless, it was to see
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep.
Here lay two sister-twins in infancy ;
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep -
Within, two lovers linked innocently
In their loose locks which over both did creep
Like ivy from one stem ;—and there lay calm,
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.
But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,
Not to be mirrowed in a holy song,
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong,
And all the code of custom's lawless law
Written upon the brows of old and young :
" This," said the wizard maiden, " is the strife
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life."

And little did the sight disturb her soul—
We, the weak mariners of that wide lake
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,
Our course unpiloted, and starless make
O'er its wide surface to an unknown goal,—
But she in the calm depths her way could take,
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide,
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

And she saw princes couched under the glow
Of sunlike gems ; and round each temple-court
In dormitories ranged, row after row,
She saw the priests asleep,—all of one sort,
For all were educated to be so.—
The peasants in their huts, and in the port
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,
And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves.

And all the forms in which those spirits lay,
Were to her sight like the diaphanous
Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array
Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us
Only their scorn of all concealment : they
Move in the light of their own beauty thus.

But these, and all now lay with sleep upon them,
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

She all those human figures breathing there
Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,
And often through a rude and worn disguise
She saw the inner form most bright and fair—
And then,—she had a charm of strange device,
Which murmured on mute lips with tender tone,
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

Alas, Aurora ! what wouldst thou have given
For such a charm, when Tithon became grey ?
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven
Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina
Had half (oh ! why not all ?) the debt forgiven
Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,
To any witch who would have taught you it ?
The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

'Tis said in after times her spirit free
Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—
But holy Dian could not chaster be
Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,
Than now this lady—like a sexless bee
Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none—
Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden
Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave
Strange panacea in a chrystal bowl.
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave,
And lived thenceforth as if some controul,
Mightier than life, were in them ; and the grave
Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,
Was a green and over-arching Bower
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

For on the night that they were buried, she
Restored the embalmers ruining, and shook
The light out of the funeral lamps, to be
A mimic day within that deathly nook ;

And she unwound the woven imagery
Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took
The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,
And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

And there the body lay, age after age,
Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying,
Like one asleep in a green hermitage,
With gentle sleep about its eyelids playing,
And living in its dreams beyond the rage
Of death or life ; while they were still arraying
In liveries ever new the rapid, blind,
And fleeting generations of mankind.

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain
Of those who were less beautiful, and make
All harsh and crooked purposes more vain
Than in the desert is the serpent's wake
Which the sand covers,—all his evil gain
The miser in such dreams would rise and shake
Into a beggar's lap ;—the lying scribe
Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

The priests would write an explanation full,
Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,
How the god Apis really was a bull,
And nothing more ; and bid the herald stick
The same against the temple doors, and pull
The old cant down ; they licensed all to speak
Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats and geese,
By pastoral letters to each diocese.

The king would dress an ape up in his crown
And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,
And on the right hand of the sunlike throne
Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat
The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one
Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet
Of their great Emperor when the morning came ;
And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same !

The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and
Walked out of quarters in somnambulism,

Round the red anvils you might see them stand
Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,
Beating their swords to ploughshares;—in a band
The jailors sent those of the liberal schism
Free through the streets of Memphis; much, I wist,
To the annoyance of king Amasis.

And timid lovers who had been so coy,
They hardly knew whether they loved or not,
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;
And when next day the maiden and the boy
Met one another, both like sinners caught,
Blushed at the thing which each believed was done
Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

And then the Witch would let them take no ill:
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find
The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind,
Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,
Where torn apart, a wide wound, mind from mind,
She did unite again with visions clear
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

These were the pranks she played among the cities
Of mortal men, and what she did to sprites
And gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties
To do her will, and show their subtle slights,
I will declare another time; for it is
A tale more fit for the weird winter nights—
Than for these garish summer days, when we
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

END OF THE WITCH OF ATLAS

LETTER TO —.

Leghorn, July, 1, 1920.

The spider spreads her webs, whether she be
 In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree;
 The silk-worm in the dark green mulberry leaves
 His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves;
 So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,
 Sit spinning still round this decaying form,
 From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—
 No net of words in garish colours wrought
 To catch the idle buzzers of the day—
 But a soft cell, where, when that fades away,
 Memory may clothe in wings my living name,
 And feed it with the asphodels of fame,
 Which in those hearts which most remember me
 Grow, making love and immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist,
 Would think I were a mighty mechanist,
 Bent with sublime Archimedean art
 To breathe a soul into the iron heart
 Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,
 Which by the force of figured spells might win
 Its way over the sea, and sport therein;
 For round the walls are hung dread engines, such
 As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch
 Ixion or the Titan:—or the quick
 Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic,
 To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic;
 Or those in philosophic councils met,
 Who thought to pay some interest for the debt
 They owed
 By giving a faint foretaste of damnation
 To Shakespear, Sidney, Spenser, and the rest
 Who made our land an Island of the blest,

When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire
On freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire:
With thumb-screws, wheels, with tooth and spike and
jag,
With fishes found under the utmost crag
Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles,
Where to the sky the rude sea seldom smiles,
Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the niorn
When the exulting elements in scorn
Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,
As panthers sleep :—and other strange and dread
Magical forms the brick floor overspread——
Proteus transformed to metal did not make
More figures, or more strange; nor did he take
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,
Or heap himself in such a horrid mass
Of tin and iron, not to be understood,
And forms of unimaginable wood,
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood:
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and grooved blocks,
The elements of what will stand the shocks
Of wave, and wind, and time.—Upon the table
More knacks and quips there be than I am able
To catalogize in this verse of mine :—
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,
But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink
When at their subterranean toil they swink,
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who
Reply to them in lava-cry, halloo!
And call out to the cities o'er their head,—
Roofs, towns, and shrines.—the dying and the dead
Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all quaff
Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh.
This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within
The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin,
In colour like the wake of light that stains
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains
The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze
Is still—blue heaven smiles over the pale seas.
And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I

Yield to the impulse of an infancy
Outlasting manhood—I have made to float
A rude idealism of a paper boat—
A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know
The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so
He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next
Lie bills and calculations much perplexed,
With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint
Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.
Then comes a range of mathematical
Instruments, for plans nautical and statical,
A heap of rosin, a green broken glass
With ink in it;—a china cup that was
What it will never be again, I think,
A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink
The liquor doctors rail at—and which I
Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die
We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea,
And cry out,—heads or tails? where'er we be.
Near that a dusty paint-box, some old hooks,
A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,
Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,
To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims,
Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray
Of figures,—disentangle them who may.
Baron de Tott's memoirs beside them lie,
And some odd volumes of old chemistry.
Near them a most inexplicable thing,
With least in the middle—I'm conjecturing
How to make Henry understand;—but—no,
I'll leave, as Spencer says, with many mo,
This secret in the pregnant womb of time,
Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,
The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind
Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind
The gentle spirit of our meek reviews
Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,
Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;—

I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent,
But not for them—Libeccio rushes round
With an inconstant and an idle sound,
I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke
Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak
Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare :
The ripe corn under the undulating air,
Undulates like an ocean ;—and the vines
Are trembling wide in all their trelliced lines—
The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill
The empty pauses of the blast ;—the hill
Looks hoary through the white electric rain,
And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain
The interrupted thunder howls ; above
One chasm of heaven smiles, like the age of love
On the unquiet world ;—while such things are,
How could one worth your friendship heed the war
Of worms ? The shriek of the world's carrion jays,
Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise !

You are not here ! The quaint which Memory sees
In vacant chairs your absent images,
And points where once you sat, and now should be
But are not.—I demand if ever we
Shall meet as then we met ;—and she replies,
Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes,
“ I know the past alone—but summon home
“ My sister Hope, she speaks of all to come.”
But I, an old diviner, who know well
Every false verse of that sweet oracle,
Turned to the sad enchantress once again,
And sought a respite from my gentle pain,
In acting every passage o'er and o'er
Of our communion.—How on the sea shore
We watched the ocean and the sky together,
Under the roof of blue Italian weather ;
How I ran home through last year's thunder storm,
And felt the transverse lightning linger warm
Upon my cheek : and how we often made
Treats for each other, where good-will outweighed
The frugal luxury of our country cheer,

As it well might, were it less firm and clear
Than ours must ever be ;—and how we spun
A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun
Of this familiar life, which seems to be
But is not,—or is but quaint mockery
Of all we would believe: or sadly blame
The jarring and inexplicable frame
Of this wrong world :—and then anatomize
The purposes and thoughts of men, whose eyes
Were closed in distant years ;—or widely guess
The issue of the earth's great business,
When we shall be as we no longer are;
Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war
Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not ; or how
You listened to some interrupted flow
Of visionary rhyme ;—in joy and pain
Struck from the fountains of my brain,
With little skill, perhaps ;—or how we sought
Those deepest wells of passion or of thought,
Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,
Staining the sacred waters with our tears;
Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed !
Or how I, wisest lady ! then indued
The language of a land which now is free,
And winged with thoughts of truth and majesty,
Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,
And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,
“ My name is Legion ! ”—that majestic tongue
Which Caldron over the desert flung
Of ages and of nations ; and which found
An echo in our hearts, and with the sound
Startled oblivion ;—thou wert then to me
As is a nurse—when inarticulately
A child would talk as its grown parents do.
If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,
If hawks chase doves through the aerial way,
Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,
Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast
Out of the forest of the pathless past
These recollected pleasures ?

You are now
 In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow
 At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
 Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.
 Yet in its depth what treasures ! You will see

You will see C—— ; he who sits obscure
 In the exceeding lustre and the pure
 Intense irradiation of a mind,
 Which, with his own internal lustre blind,
 Plugs wearily through darkness and despair—
 A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
 A hooded eagle among blinking owls.
 You will see H—t ; one of those happy souls
 Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
 This world would smell like what it is—a tomb ;
 Who is, what others seem ;—his room no doubt
 Is still adorned by many a cast from Shout,
 With graceful flowers, tastefully placed about ;
 And coronals of hay from ribbons hung,
 And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung,
 The gifts of the most learn'd among some dozens
 Of female friends, sisters-in-law and cousins.
 And there is he with his eternal puns,
 Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns
 Thundering for money at a poet's door ;
 Alas ! it is no use to say, "I'm poor !" —
 Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
 Things wiser than were ever said in book,
 Except in Shakespear's wisest tenderness.
 You will see H—, and I cannot express
 His virtues, though I know that they are great,
 Because he locks, then barricades, the gate
 Within which they inhabit ;—of his wit
 And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit
 He is a pearl within an oyster shell,
 One of the richest of the deep. And there
 Is English P—with his mountain Fair
 Turned into a Flamingo,—that shy bird
 That gleams i'the Indian air. Have you not heard
 When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,

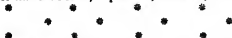
His best friends hear no more of him? but you
 Will see him and will like him too, I hope,
 With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope
 Matched with this camel-leopard; his fine wit
 Makes such a wound, the knife is loss in it;
 A strain too learned for a shallow age,
 Too wise for selfish biggots;—let his page
 Which charms the chosen spirits of the age,
 Fold itself up for a serener clime
 Of years to come, and find its recompence
 In that just expectation. Wit and sense,
 Virtue and human knowledge, all that might
 Make this dull world a business of delight,
 Are all combined in H. S.—And these,
 With some exceptions, which I need not tease
 Your patience by descanting on, are all,
 You and I know in London.

I recal

My thoughts and bid you look upon the night,
 As water does a sponge, so the moonlight
 Fills the void, hollow, universal air.
 What see you?—Unpavillioned heaven is fair,
 Whither the moon, into her chamber gone,
 Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
 Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep;
 Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
 Piloted by the many wandering blast,
 And the rare stars rush through them, dim and fast.
 All this is beautiful in every land.
 But what see you beside? A shabby stand
 Of hackney-coaches—a brick house or wall,
 Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl
 Of our unhappy politics;—or worse—
 A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse
 Mixed with the Watchman's, partner of her trade,
 You must accept in place of serenade.—
 I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit
 Built round dark caverns, even to the root
 Of the living stems who feed them; in whose bowers
 There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;

Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn
 Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne
 In circles quaint, and every changing dance,
 Like winged stars the fire-flies flash and glance
 Pale in the open moonshine ; but each one
 Under the dark trees seems a little sun,
 A meteor tamed ; a fixed star gone astray
 From the silver regions of the milky way.
 Afar the Contadino's song is heard,
 Rude, but made sweet by distance ;—and a bird
 Which cannot be a nightingale, and yet
 I know none else that sings so sweet as it
 At this late hour ;—and then all is still ;—
 Now Italy or London, which you will !

Next winter you must pass with me ; I'll have
 My house by that time turned into a grave
 Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,
 And all the dreams which our tormentors are.
 Oh that H ——— and ——— were there,
 With every thing belonging to them fair !—
 We will have books ; Spanish, Italian, Greek,



Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,
 Yet let's be merry ; we'll have tea and toast ;
 Custards for supper, and an endless host
 Of syllabubs, and jellies, and mince-pies,
 And other such lady-like luxuries,—
 Feasting on which we will philosophise.
 And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,
 To thaw the six weeks winter in our blood,
 And then we'll talk ;—what shall we talk about ?
 Oh ! there are themes enough for many a bout
 Of thought-entangled descant ;—as to nerves
 With cones and parallelograms and curves,
 I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare
 To bother me,—when you are with me there.
 And they shall never more sip laudanum
 From Helicon or Himeros ;—we'll come

And in despite of * * * and of the devil,
Will make our friendly philosophic revel
Outlast the leafless time ;—till buds and flowers
Warn the obscure inevitable hours
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew :—
“ To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

—00—

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

—

SWIFT as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good, the sun sprang forth
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask
Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth—
The smokeless altars of the mountain snows
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth
Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,
To which the birds tempered their matin lay.
All flowers in field or forest which uncloze
Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,
Swinging their censers in the element,
With orient incense lit by the new ray
Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent
Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air ;
And, in succession due, did continent,
Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear
The form and character of mortal mould,
Rise as the sun their father rose, to bear
Their portion of the toil, which he of old
Took as his own and then imposed on them ;
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem
The cone of night, now they were laid asleep
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chesnut flung athwart the steep
Of a green Apennine : before me fled
The night ; behind me rose the day ; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head ;
When a strange trance over my fancy grew
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread

Was so transparent, that the scene came through
As clear as when a veil of light is drawn
O'er evening hills they glimmer ; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn,
Bathed in the same cold dew my brow and hair,
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there
The birds, the fountains, and the ocean, hold,
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air,
And then a vision on my brain was rolled.

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,
This was the tenor of my waking dream :—
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stre^a
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude ; and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky
One of the million leaves of summer's bier !
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear,
Some flying from the thing they feared, and some
Seeking the object of another's fear ;

And others as with steps towards the tomb,
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked and called it death:
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:

But more with motions, which each other crost,
Pursued or spurned the shadows the clouds threw,
Or birds within the noon-day ether lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew,
And weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,
Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells for ever burst;
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed,

With over-arching elms and caverns cold,
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they
Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way
The throng grew wilder, and the woods of June
When the south wind shakes the extinguished day,

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,
But icy cold, obscured with [blinding] light
The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon

When on the sunlit limits of the night
Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,
And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might,

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear
The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim frown
Bends in dark ether from her infant's chair,—

So came a chariot on the silent storm
Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape
So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,
Crouching within the shadow of a tomb,
And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint ethereal gloom
Tempering the light upon the chariot beam ;
A Janus-visaged shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-winged team ;
The shapes which drew it in thick lightnings
Were lost :—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.
All the four faces of that charioteer
Had their eyes banded ; little profit brings

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun
Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been, or will be done ;
So ill was the car-guided—but it past
With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,
Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,
And saw, like clouds upon the thunders blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance
Raging around—such seemed the jubilee
As when to meet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome pour ed forth her living sea
From senate house, and forum, and theatre,
When [] upon the free

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.
Nor wanted here the just similitude
Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude
Was driven ;—all those who had grown old in power
Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour
Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower ;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow
Till the great winter lay the form and name
Of this green earth with them for ever low ;—

Fled back like eagles to their native noon,
Or those who put aside the diadem
Of earthly thrones or gems [

Nor those who went before, fierce and obscene
The wild dance maddens in the van, and those
Who lead it—fleet as shadows on the green.

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,
Convulsed, and on the rapid whirlwinds spun
Of that fierce spirit, whose unholy leisure

**Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air
As their feet twinkle ; they recede, and now
Bending within each other's atmosphere**

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled,
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle
And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Yet ere I can say *where*—the chariot hath
Past over them—nor other trace I find
But as of foam after the ocean's path

Is spent upon the desert shore;—behind,
Old men and women foully disarrayed,
Shake their grey hairs in the insulting wind,

To seek, to [], to strain with limbs decayed,
Limping to reach the light which leaves them still
Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will
They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose
Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose
Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,
And past in these performs what [] in those,

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
Half to myself I said—And what is this?
Whose shape is that within the car? And why—

I would have added—is all here amiss?—
But a voice answered—"Life!"—I turned, and knew
(O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
To strange distortion out of the hill side,
Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide
And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,
And that the holes it vainly sought to hide,

Were, or had been, eyes:—"If thou canst, forbear
To join the dance, which I had well foreborne!"
Said the grim Feature of my thought: "Aware,

"I will unfold that which to this deep scorn
Led me and my companions, and relate
The progress of the pageant since the morn;

"If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,
Follow it thou even to the night, but I
Am weary."—Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily
He paused; and, ere he could resume, I cried;
"First, who art thou?"—"Before thy memory,

" I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died,
And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
Had been with purer sentiment supplied,

" Corruption would not now thus much inherit
Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise
Stained that which ought to have disdained to wear it;

" If I have been extinguished, yet there rise
A thousand beacons from the spark I bore"—

" And who are those chained to the car?"—"The wise,

" The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore
Mitres, and helms, and crowns, or wreaths of light,
Signs of thought's empire over thought—their lore

" Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

" Caught them ere evening."—"Who is he with chin
Upon his breast, and hands crost on his chain?"—

" The Child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

" The world, and lost all that it did contain
Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more
Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain

" Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before

" Fall'n, as Napoleon fell."—"I felt my cheek
Alter, to see the shadow pass away
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak,

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay;
And much I grieved to think how power and will
In opposition rule our mortal day,

And why God made irreconcilable
Good and the means of good; and for despair
I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were
And scarce have ceased to be.—"Dost thou behold,"
Said my guide, "those spoilers spotted Voltaire,

"Frederic, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,
And hoary anarchs, demagogues, and sage—
—name the world thinks always old,

"For in the battle life and they did wage,
She remained conqueror. I was overcome
By my own heart alone, which neither age,

"Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb
Could temper to its object."—"Let them pass,"
I cried, "the world and its mysterious doom

"Is not so much more glorious than it was,
That I desire to worship those who drew
New figures on its false and fragile glass

"As the old faded."—"Figures ever new
Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;
We have but thrown, as those before us threw,

"Our shadows on it as it past away.
But mark how chained to the triumphal chair
The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

"All that is mortal of great Plato there
Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not:
The star that ruled his doom was far too fair,

"And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,
Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,
Or age, or sloth, or slavery, could subdue not.

"And near walk the [] twain,
The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion
Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

"The world was darkened beneath either pinton
Of him whom from the flock of conquerors
Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion;

"The other long outlived both woes and wars,
Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept
The jealous key of truth's eternal doors,

"If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt
Like lightning out of darkness—he compelled
The Proteus shape of Nature as it slept

" To wake, and lead him to the caves that held
The treasure of the secrets of its reign.
See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

" The passions which they sung, as by their strain
May well be known : their living melody
Tempers its own contagion to the vein

" Of those who are infected with it—I
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain !
And so my words have seeds of misery"—

* * * * *

[There is a chasm here in the MS. which it is impossible to fill up. It appears from the context, that other shape pass, and that Rousseau still stood beside the dreamer as]

—— he pointed to a company,
Midst whom I quickly recognised the heirs
Of Cæsar's crime, from him to Constantine ;
The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad :
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God ;
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,
Was worshipped by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched—" Their power was given
But to destroy," replied the leader :—" I
Am one of those who have created, even

" If it be but a world of agony."—
" Whence comest thou ? and whither goest thou ?
How did thy course begin ?" I said, " and why ?

" Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought—
Speak !"—" Whence I am, I partly seem to know,

" And how and by what paths I have been brought
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess ;—
Why this should be, my mind can compass not ;

" Whither the conqueror huries me, still less ;—
But follow thou, and from spectator turn
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

" And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
From thee. Now listen :—In the April prime,
When all the forest tips began to burn

" With kindling green, touched by the azure clime
Of the young year's dawn, I was laid asleep
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

" Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep ;
And from it came a gentle rivulet,
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep

" Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove
With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

" All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,
Which they had known before that hour of rest ;
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

" Her only child who died upon her breast
At eventide—a king would mourn no more
The crown of which his brows were dispossess

" When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor,
To gild his rival's new prosperity.
Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

" Ills, which if ills can find no cure from thee,
The thought of which no other sleep will quell,
Nor other music blot from memory,

" So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell ;
And whether life had been before that sleep
The heaven which I imagine, or a hell

" Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,
I know not. I arose, and for a space
The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

" Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common sun
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

" Was filled with magic sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense
Amid the gilding waves and shadows dun ;

" And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,
And the sun's image radiantly intense

" Burned on the waters of the well that glowed
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze
With winding paths of emerald fire ; there stood

" Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze
Of his own glory, on the vibrating
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

" A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,
And the invisible rain did ever sing

" A silver music on the mossy lawn ;
And still before me on the dusky grass,
Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn :

" In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,
Mantling with bright Nepenthe ; the fierce splendour
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

" Out of the deep cavern, with palms so tender,
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow :
She glided along the river, and did bend her

" Head under the dark boughs, till, like a willow,
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream
That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

" As one enamoured is upborne in dream
O'er lily-paven lakes mid silver mist,
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

" Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed
The dancing foam ; partly to glide along
The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

~ Or the faint morning beams that fell among
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees ;
And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song

“ Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,
And fallen drops, moved to a measure new
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

“ Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew ;

“ And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blot
The thoughts of him who gazed on them ; and soon

“ All that was, seemed as if it had been not ;
And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
Her feet like embers ; and she, thought by thought,

“ Trampled its sparks into the dust of death ;
As day upon the threshold of the east
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath

“ Of darkness re-illumine even the least
Of heaven's living eyes—like day she came,
Making the night a dream ; and ere she ceased

“ To move, as one between desire and shame
Suspended, I said, If, as it doth seem,
Thou comest from the realm without a name,

“ Into this valley of perpetual dream,
Show whence I came, and where I am, and why—
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

“ Arise and quench thy thirst,” was her reply.
And as a shut lily, stricken by the wand
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy

“ I rose ; and, bending at her sweet command,
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,
And suddenly my brain became as sand,

“ Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador ;
Whilst the wolf from which they fled amazed,

" Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,
Until the second bursts ;—so on my sight
Burst a new vision, never seen before,

" And the fair shape waned in the coming light,
As ve'l by veil the silent splendour drops
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

" Of sun-rise, ere it tinge the mountain tops ;
And as the presence of that fairest planet,
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

" That his day's path may end as he began it
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,

" Or the soft note in which his dear lament
The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress
That turned his weary slumber to content ; *

" So knew I in that light's severe excess
The presence o. that shape which on the stream
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

" More dimly than a day-appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep ;
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

" Through the sick day in which we wake to weep,
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost ;
So did that shape its obscure tenor keep

" Beside my path, as silent as a ghost ;
But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,
With solemn speed and stunning music, crost

" The forest, and as if from some dread war
Triumphantly returning, the loud million
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

" A moving arch of victory, the vermilion
And green, and azure plumes of Iris, had
Built high over her wind-winged pavilion,

* The favourite song, "*Stanco di pascolar le peccorelle*," is a Brescian national air

“ And underneath ethereal glory clad
The wilderness, and far before her flew
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

“ Shadow to fall from leaf and stone ; the crew
Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance
Within a sunbeam ;—some upon the new

“ Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance
The grassy vesture of the desert, played,
Forgetful of the chariot’s swift advance

“ Others stood gazing, till within the shade
Of the great mountain its light left them dim ;
Others outspeeded it ; and others made

“ Circles around it, like the clouds that swim
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air ;
And more did follow, with exulting hymn, —

“ The chariot and the captives fettered there :—
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood
Fell into some track at last, and were

“ Borne onward. I among the multitude
Was swept—me, sweetest flowers delayed not long ;
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude ;

“ Me, not that falling stream’s Lethean song ;
Me, not the phantom of that early form,
Which moved upon its motion—but among

“ The thickest billows of that living storm
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

“ Before the chariot had begun to climb
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell,
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

“ Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,
Through every paradise and through all glory,
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

“ The words of hate and care ; the wondrous story
How all things are transfigured except Love ;
For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

" The world can hear not the sweet notes that move
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers—
A wonder worthy of his rhyme—the grove

" Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,
The earth was grey with phantoms, and the air
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

" A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,
Strange night upon some Indian vale ;—thus were

" Phantoms diffused around ; and some did fling
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
Behind them ; some like eaglets on the wing

" Were lost in the white day ; others like elves
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves :

" And others sate chattering like restless apes
On vulgar hands, * * * * *
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes

" Of kingly mantles ; some across the tire
Of pontiffs rode, like demons ; others played
Under the crown which girt with empire

" A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made
Their nests in it The old anatomies
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

" Of demon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes
To re-assume the delegated power,
Array'd in which those worms did monarchize,

" Who made this earth their charnel. Others more
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist
Of common men, and round their heads did soar ;

" Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest, and theorist ;—

" And others, like discoloured flakes of snow
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

" Which they extinguished ; and, like tears, they were
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

" Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained
The track in which we moved. After brief space,
From every form the beauty slowly waned ;

" From every firmest limb and fairest face
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
The action and the shape without the grace

" Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft
With care ; and in those eyes where once hope shone,
Desire, like a lioness bereft

" Of her last cub, glared ere it died : each one
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

" In autumn evening from a polar tree,
Each like himself, and like each other were
At first ; but some distorted seemed to be

" Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air ;
And of this stuff the car's creative ray
Wrapt all the busy phantoms that were there,

" As the sun shapes the clouds ; thus on the way
Mask after mask fell from the countenance
And form of all ; and long before the day

" Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died ;
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

" And fell, as I have fallen, by the way side ;—
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows past,
And least of strength and beauty did abide.

" Then, what is life ? I cried."—

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

—00—

A VISION OF THE SEA.

Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
 Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
 From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
 And, when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from heaven.
 She sees the black trunks of the water-spouts spin,
 And bend, as if heaven was raining in,
 Which they seem to sustain with their terrible mass
 As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
 To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
 And the waves and the thunders, made silent around,
 Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now toss'd
 Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
 In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
 Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
 It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
 Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
 Dim mirrors of ruin hang gleaming about;
 While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
 Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
 With splendour and terror the black ship environ,
 Or, like sulphur flakes hurl'd from a mine of pale fire,
 In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
 The pyramid billows, with white points of brine,
 In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
 As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
 The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
 While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
 Of the whirlwind that stript it of branches has past.
 The intense thunder-balls which are raining from heaven
 Have shatter'd its mast, and it stands black and riven.
 The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
 On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,

Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
 Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
 One deck is burst up from the waters below,
 And it splits like the ice when the thaw-blasts blow
 O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
 Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
 Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
 Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose,
 In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold:
 (What now makes them tame, is what then made them
 bold;)

Who crouch side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
 The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank,
 Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
 On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
 Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
 And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
 Till a lead-colour'd fog gather'd up from the deep,
 Whose breath was quick pestilence; then the cold sleep
 Crept, like blight, through the ears of a thick field of corn,
 O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
 With their hammocks for coffins, the seamen aghast,
 Like dead men, the dead limbs of their comrades cast
 Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
 And the sharks and the dog-fish their grave-clothes
 unbound.

And were glutted like Jews, with this manna rain'd down
 From God on their wilderness. One after one
 The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
 When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
 But seven remain'd. Six the thunder had smitten,
 And they lie black as mummies on which Time has
 written

His scorn of the embalmer: the seventh, from the deck
 An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back
 And hung out to the tempest a wreck on the wreck.
 No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
 Than heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
 It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
 She clasps a bright child on her upgather'd knees:

It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea ; with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near :
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors : its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye,
Whilst its mother's is lustreless. " Smile not, my child,
But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
So dreadful since thou must divide it with me !
Dream, sleep ! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
Will it rock thee not, infant ? 'Tis beating with dread !
Alas ! what is life, what is death, what are we,
That when the ship sinks we no longer may be !
What ! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more ?
To be after life what we have been before ?
Not to touch those sweet hands ? Not to look on those
eyes,
Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit, which I, day by day,
Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower ?"—Lo ! the
ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip ;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them, hair, ears, limbs, and
eyne,
Stand rigid with horror ; a loud, long, hoarse, cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane.
The hurricane came from the west, and pass'd on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm ;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste,
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
Between ocean and heaven, like an ocean, pass'd,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world.

Which, bas'd on the sea and to heaven upcurl'd,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag;
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
They are scatter'd like foam on the torrent; and where
The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of clouds are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lulled by the motion and murmurings,
And the long'glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And over head glorious, but dreadful to see
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting, it slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with heaven's azure
smile,
The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows: the jar and the rattle
Of solid bones crush'd by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness,
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins,
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and
the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams

And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fig-winged tomb of the victory. The other
Is winging his way from the fate of his brother,
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo ! a boat
Advances ; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea,
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters ! Her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring ; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst —————

—00—

ODE TO HEAVEN

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

First Spirit. Palace-roof of cloudless nights !
Paradise of golden lights !
Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, and which wert then !
Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
Presence-chamber, temple, home,
Ever-canopying dome,
Of acts and ages yet to come !

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
 Earth, and all earth's company ;
 Living globes which ever throng
 Thy deep chasms and wildernesses ;
 And green worlds that glide along ;
 And swift stars with flashing tresses ;
 And icy moons most cold and bright
 And mighty suns beyond the nig.
 Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
 Heaven ! for thou art the abode
 Of that power which is the glass
 Wherein man his nature sees.
 Generations as they pass
 Worship thee with bended knees
 Their unremaining gods and they
 Like a river roll away :
 Thou remainest such alway.

Second Spirit. Thou art but the mind's first chamber
 Round which its young fancies clamber
 Like weak insects in a cave,
 Lighted up by stalactites ;
 But the portal of the grave,
 Where a world of new delights
 Will make thy best glories seem
 But a dim and noonday gleam
 From the shadow of a dream !.

Third Spirit. Peace ! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
 At your presumption, atom-born !
 What is heaven ? and what are ye
 Who its brief expanse inherit ?
 What are suns and spheres which flee
 With the instinct of that spirit
 Of which ye are but a part ?
 Drops which Nature's mighty heart
 Drives through thinnest veins. Depart ?

 What is heaven ? a globe of dew,
 Filling in the morning new [waken
 Some eyed flower, whose young leaves

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

On an unimagined world :
 Constellated suns unshaken,
 Orbits measureless, are furled
 In that frail and fading sphere
 With ten millions gathered there,
 To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

—00—

AN EXHORTATION.

CAMELIONS feed on light and air:
 Poets' food is love and fame :
 If in this wide world of care
 Poets could but find the same
 With as little toil as they,
 Would they ever change their hue
 As the light camelions do,
 Suiting it to every ray
 Twenty times a-day ?

Poets are on this cold earth,
 As camelions might be,
 Hidden from their early birth
 In a cave beneath the sea :
 Where light is camelions' change,
 Where love is not, poets do :
 Fame is love disguised : if few
 Find either, never think it strange
 That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
 A poet's free and heavenly mind :
 If bright camelions should devour
 Any food but beams and wind,
 They would grow as earthly soon
 As their brother lizards are.
 Children of a sunnier star,
 Spirits from beyond the moon,
 Oh, refuse the boon !

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.

O ^{an} Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, ^{unlike}
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds, like flocks, to feed in air)
With living hues and odours, plain and hill:

Wild spirit, which are moving every where;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II. Thou, on whose ^{stream} ^{mid} the steep sky's com-
motion,

Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height

The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
Of the dying year, to which this closing night

Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might,

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere,
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: Oh hear!

III. Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?



THE CLOUD.

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams ;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet birds every one,
When rock'd to rest, on their mother's breast.
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast ;
And all the night, 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers
Lightning, my pilot, sits ;
In a cavern under, is fethered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits :
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea ;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves, remains ;

And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead.
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit, one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings;
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And, wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer:
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-bullt tent,
Till the calm river, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl:
The volcano's are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch, through which I march,

With hurricane, fire, and snow,
 When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
 Is the million-coloured bow ;
 The sphere-fire above, its soft colours wove,
 While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of the earth and water,
 And the nurseling of the sky ;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
 I change, but I cannot die.
 For after the rain when, with never a stain,
 The pavilion of heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
 Build up the blue dome of air—
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I rise and upbuild it again.

—00—

TO A SKYLARK.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit !
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. *effuse from mind*
 Higher, still and higher,
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire ;
 The blue deep thou wingest, *more*
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever, singest. *remains*
 In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,
 O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
 Thou dost float and run,
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

from the clouds
from the clouds

The pale purple even ^{who - smiles - & looks}
 Melts around thy flight; ^{in the}

Like a star of heaven,

In the broad day-light ^{amidst}

Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

Keen are the arrows ^{darting}

Of that silver sphere,

Whose intense lamp narrows ^{in a misting of}

In the white dawn clear ^{as ever}

Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air

With thy voice is loud, ^{as ever}

As, when night is bare,

From one lonely cloud

The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed

What thou art we know not;

What is most like thee?

From rainbow clouds there flow not

Drops so bright to see,

As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden

In the light of thought,

Singing hymns unbidden,

Till the world is wrought

To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden

In a palace tower,

Soothing her love-laden

Soul in secret hour,

With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower;

Like a glow-worm golden

In a dell of dew,

Scattering unbeholden

Its aerial hue

Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the ^[view:]

Like a rose embower'd

In its own green leaves,

By warm winds deflower'd,
 Till the scent it gives [thieves.
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged

Sound of vernal showers *in music*

On the twinkling grass, *outside*

Rain-awakened flowers,

All that ever was

Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass :

Teach us, sprite or bird,

What sweet thoughts are thine ;

I have never heard,

Praise of love or wine

That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymenæal,

Or triumphal chaunt,

Matched with thine would be all

But an empty vaunt,—

A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains

Of thy happy strain ?

What fields, or waves, or mountains ?

What shapes of sky or plain ?

What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance

Langour cannot be :

Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee :

Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,

Thou of death must deem

Things more true and deep

Than we mortals dream,

Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not :

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught :

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought

conf

Yet if we could scorn *schern*
 Hate, and pride, and fear; *angst*
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever could come near.
 Better than all measures *reichtum*
 Of delight and sound, *Wohlfahrt*
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!
 Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

—00—

OH! THERE ARE SPIRITS.

Oh! there are spirits in the air,
 And genii of the evening breeze.
 And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
 As star-beams among twilight trees:--
 Such lovely ministers to meet
 Oft hast thou turn'd from men thy lonely feet.
 With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
 And mountain seas, that are the voice
 Of these inexplicable things,
 Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice
 When they did answer thee; but they
 Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.
 And thou hast sought in starry eyes
 Beams that were never meant for thine,
 Another's wealth;—tame sacrifice
 To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?
 Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
 Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah ! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
On the false earth's inconstancy ?
Did thine own mind afford no scope
Of love, or moving thoughts to thee ?
That natural scenes or human smiles
Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted ;
The glory of the moon is dead ;
Night's ghost and dreams have now departed ;
Thine own soul still is true to thee,
But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
Dream not to chase ;—the mad endeavour
Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
Dark as it is, all change would aggravate



SUPERSTITION.

Thou taintest all thou look'st upon ! The stars,
Which on thy cradle beam'd so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distemper'd playfulness
Of thy untutor'd infancy ; the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods : the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becamest, a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies : every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls ;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief

Of thy blind heart : yet still thy youthful hands
 Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
 Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain ;
 'Thine eager gaze scan'd the stupendous scene,
 Whose wonders mock'd the knowledge of thy pride :
 'Their everlasting and unchanging laws
 Reproach'd thine ignorance. A while thou stoodest
 Baffled and gloomy : then thou didst sum up
 The elements of all that thou didst know ;
 The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,
 'The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
 The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
 The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,
 Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
 And all their causes, to an abstract point
 Converging, thou didst give it name, and form,
 Intelligence, and unity, and power.

—00—

MUTABILITY.

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon ;
 How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
 S'reaking the darkness radiantly !—yet soon
 Night closes round, and they are lost for ever :

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
 Give various response to each varying blast,
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings
 One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest—A dream has power to poison sleep :
 We rise—One wandering thought pollutes the day :
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep ·
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away :

It is the same !—For, be it joy or sorrow,
 The path of its departure still is free :
 Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow ;
 Nought may endure but Mutability.

LINES

WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF
NAPOLEON.

What! alive and so bold, O Earth?
Art thou not over bold?
What! leapest thou forth as of old
In the light of thy morning mirth,
The last of the flock of the starry fold?
Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
And canst thou more, Napoleon being dead?

How! is not thy quick heart cold?
What spark is alive on thy hearth?
How! is not *his* death-knell knoll'd?
And livest *thou* still, mother Earth?
Thou wert warming thy fingers old
O'er the embers cover'd and cold
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled—
What, mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

"Who has known me of old," replied Earth,
"Or who has my story told?
It is thou who art over-bold."
And the lightning of scorn laugh'd forth
As she sung, "To my bosom I fold
All my sons when their knell is knoll'd,
And so with living motion all are fed,
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead."

"Still alive and still bold," shouted Earth,
"I grow bolder, and still more bold,
The dead fill me ten thousand fold
Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth;
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
Like a frozen chaos uproll'd,
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed."

"Ay, alive and bold," mutter'd Earth,
"Napoleon's fierce spirit roll'd,
In terror, and blood, and gold,
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold,
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled."

—00—

ON DEATH.

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.—*Ecclesiastes*.

The pale, the cold, and the moony smile
Which the meteor beam of a starless night
Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,
Is the flame of life so fickle and wan
That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of thy wordly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,
Where hell and heaven shall leave thee free
To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,
This world is the mother of all we feel,
And the coming of death is a fearful blow
To a brain unencompass'd with nerves of steel;
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,
Where all but this frame must surely be,
Though the fine wrought eye and the wondrous ear
No longer will live, to hear or to see

All that is great and all that is strange
In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death ?

Who lifteth the veil of what is to come ?

Who painteth the shadows that are beneath

The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb ?

Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be

With the fears and the love for that which we see ?



A SUMMER EVENING CHURCH-YARD,
LECHDALE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere

Each vapour that obscured the sun-set's ray,

And pallid evening twines its beamy hair

In duskier braids around the languid eyes of day :

Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,

Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,

Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea ;

Light, sound, and motion, own the potent sway,

Responding to the charm with its own mystery.

The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass

Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, ærial pile ! whose pinnacles

Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,

Obeyst in silence their sweet solemn spells,

Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,

Around whose lessening and invisible height

Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres :

And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,

Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,

Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around

And, mingling with the still night and mute sky,

Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and soften'd, death is mild
 And terrorless as this serenest night :
 Here could I hope, like some inquiring child [sight
 Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human
 Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
 That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

—00—

THE TOWER OF FAMINE.*

Amid the desolation of a city,
 Which was the cradle, and is now the grave
 Of an extinguish'd people, so that pity
 Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of oblivion's wave,
 There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built
 Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave
 For bread, and gold, and blood : pain, link'd to guilt,
 Agitates the light flame of their hours,
 Until its vital oil is spent or spilt :
 There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers
 And sacred domes ; each marble-ribbed roof,
 The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers
 Of solitary wealth ! The tempest-proof
 Pavilions of the dark Italian air
 Are by its presence dimm'd—they stand aloof,
 And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare
 As if a spectre, wrapt in shapeless terror,
 Amid a company of ladies fair
 Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
 Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,
 The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
 Should be absorb'd till they to marble grew.

* At Pisa there still exists the prison of Ugolino, which goes by the name of ' La Torre della Fame : ' in the adjoining building the galley-slaves are confined. It is situated near the Ponte al Mare, on the Arno.

TO WORDSWORTH

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
 That things depart which never may return !
 Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
 Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
 These common woes I feel. One loss is mine,
 Which thou too feel'st ; yet I alone deplore.
 Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
 On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar :
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
 Above the blind and battling multitude.
 In honour'd poverty thy voice did weave
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty.—
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
 Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

— 00 —

A LAMENT.

Swifter far than summer's flight,
 Swifter far than youth's delight,
 Swifter far than happy night,
 Art thou come and gone :
 As the earth when leaves are dead,
 As the night when sleep is sped,
 As the heart when joy is fled,
 I am left lone, alone.

The swallow Summer comes again,
 The owlet Night resumes her reign,
 But the wild swan Youth is fain
 To fly with thee, false as thou.
 My heart each day desires the morrow,
 Sleep itself is turned to sorrow,
 Vainly would my winter borrow
 Sunny leaves from any bough.

Lilies for a bridal bed,
 Roses for a matron's head,
 Violets for a maiden dead,
 Pansies let my flowers be :
 On the living grave I bear,
 Scatter them without a tear,
 Let no friend, however dear,
 Waste one hope, one fear for me

— — — — —

TO NIGHT.

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night !
 Out of the misty eastern cave,
 Where, all the long and lone daylight,
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
 Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight !

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
 Star-inwrought !
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of day,
 Kiss her until she be wearied out,
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long sought !

When I arose and saw the dawn,
 I sighed for thee ;
 When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
 And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
 And the weary Day turned to his rest,
 Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me ?
 Thy sweet child Sleep, thy filmy-eyed,

me/ Murdered like a noon-tide bee,
 Shall I nestle near thy side?
 Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
 No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon—
 Sleep will come when thou art fled;
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, beloved Night—
 Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

—00—

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI
 IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY.

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
 Upon the cloudy mountain peak supine;
 Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;
 Its horror and its beauty are divine.
 Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie
 Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine,
 Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
 The agonies of anguish and of death.

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
 Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone:
 Whereon the lineaments of that dead face
 Are graven, till the characters be grown
 Into itself, and thought no more can trace;
 'Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown
 Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
 Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

And from its head as from one body grow,
 As [] grass out of a watery rock,
 Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
 And their long tangles in each other lock

And with unending involutions show
 Their mailed radiance, as it were to mock
 The torture and the death within, and saw
 The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

And from a stone beside a poisonous elf
 Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes;
 Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft
 Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise
 Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft,
 And he comes hastening like a moth that lies
 After a taper; and the midnight sky
 Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror;
 For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
 Kindled by that inextricable error
 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
 Become a [] and ever-shifting mirror
 Of all the beauty and the terror there—
 A woman's countenance, with serpent locks,
 Gazing in death on heaven from those wet rocks.
Florence, 1819.

—oo—

MONT BLANC.

Lines written in the Vale of Chamouni.

The everlasting universe of things
 Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
 Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
 Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
 The source of human thought its tribute brings
 Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
 Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
 In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
 Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,

Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly burst and raves,
Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns, sail
Fast clouds, shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice gulphs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie,
The giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come, and ever came,
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony:
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
Which, when the voices of the desert fail,
Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion
A loud, lone sound, no other sound can tame;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance, sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate phantasy—
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unrenitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that, or thou art, no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!
Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep—that death is slumber—

And that it shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live.—I look on high ;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurl'd
The veil of life and death ? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Speed far around and inaccessibly
Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales !
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock : broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps ;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
It shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea
Of fire envelope once this silent snow ?
None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be
But for such faith which nature reconciled ;
Thou hast a voice great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe ; not understood,
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good,
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the dædal earth ; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower ;—the bound

With which from that detested trance they leap ;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be ;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die, revolve, subside, and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains,
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far foun-
tains,

Slowly rolling on ; there, many a precipice
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream ; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand ; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil ;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread ; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrent's restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult dwelling
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its sloud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high :—the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights
And many sounds, and much of life and death.

In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain ; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them :—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently ! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?
Switzerland, June 23, 1816.

—00—

EVENING.

PONT Á MARE, PISA.

Thy sun is set ; the swallows are asleep ;
Thy boats are flitting fast in the grey air,
The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep.
And evening's breath, wandering here and there
Over the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its silent dream.
There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
Nor damp within the shadow of the trees,
The wind is intermitting, dry, and light ;
And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
The dust and straws are driven up and down,
And whirled about the pavement of the town.
Within the surface of the fleeting river
The wrinkled image of the city lay,
Immoveably unquiet, and for ever

And nearer to the river's trembling edge [white,
 There grew broad flag flowers, purple, pranked with
 And starry river huds among the sedge,
 And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
 Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
 With moonlight beams of their own watery light,
 And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
 As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
 I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
 That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
 Were mingled or opposed, the like array
 Keep these imprisoned children of the Hours
 Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
 I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
 That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom?

—oo—

THE TWO SPIRITS

AN ALLEGORY.

1st Spi. O Thou, who plumed with strong desire
 Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
 A shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
 Night is coming!
 Bright are the regions of the air,
 And among the winds and beams
 It were delight to wander there—
 Night is coming!

2nd Spi. The deathless stars are bright above;
 If I would cross the shade of night,
 Within my heart is the lamp of love,
 And that is day!
 And the moon will smile with gentle light
 On my golden plumes where'er they move;

The meteors will linger round my flight,
And make night day.

1st Spi. But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain ;
See the bounds of the air are shaken—
Night is coming !

The red swift clouds of the hurricane
Yon declining sun have overtaken,
The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—
Night is coming.

2nd Spi. I see the light, and I hear the sound;
I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark
With the calm within and the light around
Which makes night day :
And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,
Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,
My moon-like flight thou then may'st mark
On high, far away.

Some say, there is a precipice
Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
Mid Alpine mountains:
And that the languid storm pursuing
That winged shape for ever flies
Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
Its aery fountains.

Some say, when nights are dry and clear,
And the death dews sleep on the morass,
Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller
Which makes night day :
And a silver shape like his early love doth pass
Upborne by her wild and glittering hair.
And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,
He finds night day.

LINES TO AN INDIAN AIR.

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright :
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how ?
To thy chamber window, sweet !

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark and silent stream—
The champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must on thine,
Beloved as thou art !

Oh lift me from the grass !
I die, I faint, I fail !
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas !
My heart beats loud and fast,
Oh ! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

—oo—

A FRAGMENT.

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins
Nature had razed their love—which could not be
But by dissevering their nativity.
And so they grew together, like two flowers
Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
Lull or awaken in their purple prime,

Which the same hand will gather—the same clime
 Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see
 All those who love.—and who ever loved like thee,
 Flordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,
 Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow
 The ardours of a vision which obscure
 The very idol of its portraiture!
 He faints, dissolved into a sense of love;
 But thou art as a planet sphered above,
 But thou art Love itself—ruling the motion
 Of his subjected spirit—such emotion
 Must end in sin and sorrow, if sweet May
 Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding day

—00—

A BRIDAL SONG.

The golden gates of sleep unbar
 Where strength and beauty met together,
 Kindle their image like a star
 In a sea of glassy weather.
 Night, with all thy stars look down,—
 Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—
 Never smiled the inconstant moon
 On a pair so true.
 Let eyes not see their own delight;—
 Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight
 Oft renew.

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her.
 Holy stars, permit no wrong!
 And return to wake the sleeper,
 Dawn,—ere it be long.
 O joy. O fear! what will be done
 In the absence of the sun!
 Come along!

THE SUNSET.

There late was One within whose subtle being,
As light and wind within some delicate cloud
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
Genius and youth contended. None may know
The sweetness of the joy which made his breath
Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
When, with the Lady of his love, who then
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
He walked along the pathway of a field
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,
But to the west was open to the sky.
There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods—and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of 'he crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.—
“Is it not strange, Isabel,” said the youth,
“I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.”

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep—but when the morning came
The lady found her lover dead and cold.
Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on—in truth I think
Her gentleness, and patience, and sad smiles,
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,
If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.
For but to see her were to read the tale
Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief;—
Her eyelashes were torn away with tears,

Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale,
Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins
And weak articulations might be seen
Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
Which one vex'd ghost inhabits, night and day,
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

" Inheritor of more than earth can give,
Passionless calm and silence unproved,
Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest,
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;
Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace!"
This was the only moan she ever made.

1816.



LINES TO A CRITIC.

Honey from silk-worms who can gather—
Or silk from the yellow bee?
The grass may grow in winter weather
As soon as hate in me.

Hate men who cant, and men who pray,
And men who rail like thee;
An equal passion to repay
They are not coy like me.

Or seek some slave of power and gold
To be thy dear heart's mate;
Thy love will move that bigot cold,
Sooner than me thy hate.

A passion like the one I prove
Cannot divided be:
I hate thy want of truth and love—
How should I then hate thee?

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY.

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion ;
Nothing in the world is single ;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine ?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another ;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother :
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea ;—
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me ?

January, 1820.

—00—

LINES.

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not ;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute :

No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest,
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high:
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From my nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.



THE WORLD'S WANDERERS.

Tell me, thou star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey
Pilgrim of heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now?

Weary wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow?

FROM THE ARABIC.

AN IMITATION.

My faint spirit was sitting in the light
 Of thy looks, my love ;
 It panted for thee like the hind at noon
 For the brooks, my love.
 Thy barb, whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight,
 Bore thee far from me ;
 My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
 Did companion thee.

Ah ! fleetest far than fleetest storm or steed,
 Or the death they bear,
 The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
 With the wings of care ;
 In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
 Shall mine cling to thee,
 Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
 It may bring to thee.



DEATH.

Death is here and death is there,
 Death is busy every where,
 All around, within, beneath,
 Above, is death—and we are death.

Death has set his mark and seal
 On all we are and all we feel,
 On all we know and all we fear,

* * * * *

First our pleasures die—and then
 Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
 These are dead, the debt is due,
 Dust claims dust—and we die too.

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves must fade and perish.
Such is our rude mortal lot,
Love itself would, did they not.



PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES.

Listen, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine,
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread.
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm
May 4th, 1818.



DIRGE FOR THE YEAR.

Orphan hours, the year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry hours, smile instead,
For the year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.
As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the dead-cold year to-day;
Solemn hours! wait aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
 The tree-swung cradle of a child,
 So the breath of these rude days
 Rocks the year :—be calm and mild,
 Trembling hours ; she will arise
 With new love within her eyes.

January grey is here,
 Like a sexton by her grave ;
 February bears the bier,
 March with grief doth howl and rave,
 And April weeps—but, O ye hours,
 Follow with May's fairest flowers.

January 1st, 1821.

—00—

LIBERTY.

The fiery mountains answer each other ;
 Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone ;
 The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
 And the ice-rocks are shaken round winter's zone
 When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown.

From a single cloud the lightning flashes,
 Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around,
 Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
 A hundred are shuddering and tottering ; the sound
 Is bellowing underground.

But keener thy gaze than the lightning's glare,
 And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp ;
 Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean ; thy stare
 Makes blind the volcanos ; the sun's bright lamp
 To thine is a fen-fire damp.

From billow and mountain and exhalation
 The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast ;
 From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
 From city to hamlet, thy dawning is cast,—
 And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
 In the van of the morning light.

SONG OF A SPIRIT.

Within the silent centre of the earth
My mansion is ; where I have lived insphered
From the beginning, and around my sleep
Have woven all the wondrous imagery
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world ;
Infinite depths of unknown elements
Massed into one impenetrable mask ;
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
Of gold, and stone, and adamantive iron.
And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and
clouds,
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
In the dark space of interstellar air.

—oo—

TO —

Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed ;
Yes, I was firm—thus wert not thou ;—
My baffled looks did fear yet dread
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone ;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scorned load of agony.

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
The [] thou alone should be,
To spend years thus, and be rewarded,
As thou, sweet love, requited me

When none were near—Oh ! I did wake
From torture for that moment's sake.
Upon my heart thy accents sweet
Of peace and pity fell like dew
On flowers half dead ;—thy lips did meet
Mine tremblingly : thy dark eyes threw
Their soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

We are not happy, sweet ; our state
Is strange and full of doubt and fear ;
More need of words that ills abate ;—
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thou and me.

Gentle and good and mild thou art,
Nor can I live if you appear
Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart
Away from me, or stoop to wear
The mask of scorn, although it be
To hide the love you feel for me.

—oo—

SONNET I.

Ye hasten to the dead ! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear ?
O thou quick Heart, which pantest to possess
All that anticipation feigneth fair !
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess
Whence thou didst come, and whither thou may'st go,
And that which never yet was known wouldest know—
Oh, whither hasten ye that thus ye press
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking alike from happiness and woe
A refuge in the cavern of grey death ?
O heart, and mind, and thoughts ! What thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below ?

SONNET II.

POLITICAL GREATNESS.

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
 Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
 Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;
 Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
 History is but the shadow of their shame.
 Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts
 As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
 Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
 Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
 By force or custom? Man who man would be,
 Must rule the empire of himself; in it
 Must be supreme, establishing his throne
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone

—00—

LINES.

Far, far away, O ye
 Halcyons of memory,
 Seek some far calmer nest
 Than this abandoned breast;—
 No news of your false spring
 'To my heart's winter bring;
 Once having gone, in vain
 Ye come again.
 Vultures, who build your howels
 High in the Future's towers,
 Withered hopes on hopes are spread,
 Dying joys, choked by the dead,
 Will serve your beaks for prey
 Many a day.

TIME.

Unfathomable Sea ! whose waves are years,
Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears !
Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality !
And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore,
Treachorous in calm, and terrible in storm,
Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea ?

—00—

THE ISLE.

There was a little lawny islet
By anemone and violet,
Like mosaic, paven :
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun, nor showers, nor breeze,
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
Each a gem engraven.
Girt by many an azure wave
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm.

—00—

THE PAST.

Wilt thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould ?
Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

Forget the dead, the past? O yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain.

—00—

GINEVRA.

Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one
Who staggers forth into the air and sun
From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,
Bewildered, and incapable, and ever
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain
Of usual shapes, till the familiar train
Of objects and of persons, passed like things
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,
Genevra from the nuptial altar went;
The vows to which her lips had sworn assent
Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,
And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth,
And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,—
And of the gold and jewels glittering there
She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare
Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,
Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight.
A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
Was less heavenly fair—her face was bowed,
And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair,
Were mirrored in the polished marble stair
Which led from the cathedral to the street;
And even as she went, her light fair feet
Erased these images.

The bride maidens who round her thronging came
 Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,
 Envyng the unenviable ; and others
 Making the joy which should have been another's,
 Their own, by gentle sympathy ; and some
 Sighing to think of an unhappy home ;
 Some few admiring what can ever lure
 Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure
 Of parent's smiles for life's great cheat ; a thing
 Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining !

But they are all dispersed—and lo ! she stands
 Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
 Alone within the garden now her own ;
 And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,
 The music of the merry marriage bells,
 Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells ;—
 Absorbed like one within a dream who dream
 That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
 A mockery of itself—when suddenly
 Antonio stood before her, pale as she.
 With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,
 He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
 And said—“ Is this thy faith ? ” and then as one
 Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun
 With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise
 And look upon his day of life with eyes
 Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,
 Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
 To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood
 Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
 Said—“ Friend, if earthly violence or ill,
 Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
 Of parents, chance, or custom, time, or change,
 Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
 Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,
 With all their strings [] can impeach
 Our love,—we love not : if the grave which hides
 The victim from the tyrant, and divides
 The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart
 Imperious inquisition to the heart

That is another's, could dissever ours,
We love not."—"What! do not the silent hours
Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?
Is not that ring"—a pledge, he would have said,
Of broken vows, but she with patient look
The golden circle from her finger took,
And said—"Accept this token of my faith,
The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;
And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell
Will mix its music with that merry bell.
Does it not sound as if they sweetly said
'We toll a corpse out of the marriage bed?'
The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn
Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
That even the dying violet will not die
Before Ginevra. The strong fantasy
Had made her accents weaker and more weak,
And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek,
And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere
Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,
Making her but an image of the thought,
Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought
News of the terrors of the coming time,
Like an accuser branded with the crime
He would have cast on a beloved friend,
Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance,
Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence—
Antonio stood and would have spoken, when
The compound voice of women and of men
Was heard approaching; he retired, while she
Was led amid the admiring company
Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon
Changed her attire for the afternoon,
And left her at her own request to keep
An hour of quiet and rest:—like one asleep
With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
Pale in the light of the declining day.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
In the lighted hall the guest are met;

The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
Of love, and admiration, and delight,
Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes
Kindling a momentary Paradise.
'This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude.
On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
Falls, and the dew of music more divine
Tempers the deep emotions of the time
To spirits cradled in a sunny clime :—
How many meet, who never yet have met,
To part too soon, but never to forget !
How many saw the beauty, power, and wit,
Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet !
But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,
As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,
And unprophetic of the coming hours,
The matin winds from the expanded flowers
Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
From every living heart which it possesses,
Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,
As if the future and the past were all
Treasured in the instant :—so Gherardi's hall
Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,
Till some one asked—"Where is the Bride?" And then
A bride's-maid went,—and ere she came again
A silence fell upon the guests—a pause
Of expectation, as when beauty awes
All hearts with its approach, though unbelied ;
Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled ;—
For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew
The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew
Louder and swifter round the company ;
And then Gherardi entered with an eye
Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

Then found Ginevra dead ! if it be death,
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,

And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light
 Mocked at the speculations they had owned
 If it be death, when there is felt around
 A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
 And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair
 From the scalp to the ancles, as it were
 Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
 And giving all it shrouded to the earth,
 And leaving as swift lightning in its flight
 Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night
 Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more
 Than the unborn dream of our life before
 Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore.
 The marriage feast and its solemnity
 Was turned to funeral pomp—the company,
 With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they
 Who loved the dead went weeping on their way
 Alone—but sorrow, mixed with sad surprise,
 Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,
 On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,
 Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.
 The lamps, which half-extinguished in their haste
 Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast,
 Shewed as it were within the vaulted room
 A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom
 Had passed out of men's minds into the air.
 Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
 Friends and relations of the dead,—and he,
 A loveless man, accepted torpidly
 The consolation that he wanted not,
 Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.
 Their whispers made the solemn silence seem
 More still—some wept, []
 Some melted into tears without a sob.
 And some with hearts that might be heard to throb
 Leant on the table, and at intervals
 Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls
 And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came
 Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame
 Of every torch and taper as it swept
 From out the chamber where the women kept.

Their tears fell on the dear companion cold
 Of pleasures now departed ; then was knolled
 The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,
 And finding death their penitent had shrived,
 Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon
 A vulture has just feasted to the bone.
 And then the mourning women came.—

* * * * *

THE DIRGE.

Old winter was gone
 In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
 And the spring came down
 From the planet that hovers upon the shore
 Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
 On the limits of wintry night ;—
 If the land, and the air, and the sea,
 Rejoice not when spring approaches,
 We did not rejoice in thee,
 Ginevra !

She is still, she is cold
 On the bridal couch,
 One step to the white death bed,
 And one to the bier,
 And one to the charnel—and one, Oh where ?
 The dark arrow fled
 In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has reel'd,
 The rats in her heart
 Will have made their nest,
 And the worms be alive in her golden hair,
 While the spirit that guides the sun
 Sits throned in his flaming chair,
 She shall sleep.

* * * * *

ALASTOR;

OR,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quærebari quæ
amarem amans amare.—*Confess. St. August.*

Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood!
If our great Mother have imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine,
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the gray grass and bare boughs;
If spring's voluptuous paintings when she breathes
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast,
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred;—then forgive
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favour now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only: I have watched
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
And my heart ever gazes on the depth
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps records of the trophies won from thee,
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,

When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,
 Like an inspired and desperate alchymist
 Staking his very life on some dark hope,
 Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
 With my most innocent love, until strange tears
 Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
 Such magic as compels the charmed night
 To render up thy charge . . . and, though ne'er yet
 Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
 Enough from incommunicable dream,
 And twilight phantasms and deep noonday thought,
 Has shone within me, that strangely now,
 And moveless as a long-forgotten lyre,
 Suspended in the solitary dome
 Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
 I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
 May modulate with murmurs of the air,
 And motions of the forests and the sea,
 And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
 Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb
 No human hands with pious reverence reared,
 But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
 Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
 Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:
 A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked
 With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
 The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:
 Gentle, and brave, and generous, no lorn bard
 Breath'd o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
 He lived, he died, he sang, in solitude.
 Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
 And virgins, as unknown he pass'd, have sighed
 And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
 The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
 And Silence, too, enamoured of that voice,
 Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision and bright silver dream,
 His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
 And sound from the vast earth and ambient air
 Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.

The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips ; and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had past, he left
His cold fire-side and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps ; and he has bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food.

He would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old :
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoever of strange
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphinx,
Dark Ethiopia on her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble demons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around.
He lingered, pouring on memorials
Of the world's youth through the long burning day :
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,
Suspended he that task—but ever gazed

And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
From duties and repose to tend his steps—
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love :—and watched his nightly sleep,
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
Of innocent dreams arose : then when red morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home,
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet, wandering on through Arabia
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the aerial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way :
Till in the vale of Cachmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamt a veiled maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought ; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge, and truth, and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
A permeating fire : wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
Subdued by its own pathos : her fair hands

Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
The beating of her heart was heard to fill
The pauses of her music, and her breath
Tumultuously accorded with those fits
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
As if her heart impatiently endured
Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turned,
And saw by the warm light of their own life
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.
His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom:—she drew back awhile,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.
Roused by the shock, he started from his trance—
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
The distant valley and the vacant woods,
Spread round where he stood.—Whither have fled
The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
The mystery and the majesty of earth,
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
The spirit of sweet human love has sent
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;

He overleaps the bound. Alas! alas!
Were limbs and breath and being intertwined
Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,
In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
That beautiful shape! does the dark gate of death
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,
Lead only to a black and watery depth,
While death's blue vault with loathliest vapours hung
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
Conduct, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart.
The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung
His brain even like despair.

While day-light held
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
With his still soul. At night the passion came,
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
Into the darkness.—As an eagle, grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
O'er the wild aery wilderness, thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,
He fled.—Red morning dawned upon his flight,
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
Day after day, a weary waste of hours,

Bearing within his life the brooding care
That ever fed on its decaying flame.
And now his limbs were lean ; his scattered hair,
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering,
Sung dirges in the wind ; his listless hand
Hung like dead bone within its wither'd skin ;
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone
As in a furnace burning secretly
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who ministered with human charity
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In his career. The infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream
Of after-times: but youthful maidens, taught
By nature, would interpret half the woe
That wasted him, would call him false names,
Brother and friend ; would press his palid hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasman shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes—a strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea shore. A swan was there
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight.—“Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird ! thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I, that I should linger here

With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echos not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts, he looked around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark,
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny, sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.
Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat; he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.
As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on,
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.
The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge.

Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.
Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave running on wave, and blast on blast
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
With dark obliterating course, he sate :
As if their genii were their ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on ;
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep ;
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day ;
Night followed, clad with stars. On every side
More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
Still fled before the storm ; still fled, like foam
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river ;
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave ;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean. Safely fled—
As if that frail and wasted human form
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight

The moon arose : and lo ! the ethereal cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves
Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save ?
The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,—
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,
The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
The little boat was driven. A cavern there

Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depth
Ingulphed the rushing sea. The boat fled on
With unrelaxing speed. "Vision and Love!"
The Poet cried aloud, "I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long."

The boat pursued
The windings of the cavern.—Day-light shone
At length upon that gloomy river's flow;
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain riven
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarled roots
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
In darkness over it. In the midst was left,
Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet, mid those battling tides
Is left,—the boat paused, shuddering. Shall it sink
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress
Of that resistless gulph embosom it?
Now shall it fall? A wandering stream of wind,
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
And lo! with gentle motion between banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,
Beneath a woven grove, it sails, and hark!
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar

With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods,
 Where the embowering trees recede, and leave
 A little space of green expanse, the cove
 Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers
 For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
 Reflecting in the crystal calm. The wave
 Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,
 Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,
 Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay,
 Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed
 To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
 But on his heart its solitude returned,
 And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid
 In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame,
 Had yet performed its ministry: it hung
 Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
 Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
 Of night close over it.

The noonday sun

Now shone upon the forest one vast mass
 Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
 A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
 Scoped in the dark base of those æry rocks
 Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever.
 The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
 Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led
 By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
 He sought in Nature's dearest haunt some bank,
 Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark
 And dark the shades accumulate—the oak,
 Expanding its immeasurable arms,
 Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
 Of the tall cedar overarching, frame,
 Most solemn domes within, and far below,
 Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
 The ash and the acacia floating hang
 Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents clothed
 In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
 Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
 The grey trunks; and, as gamesome infant's eyes,

With gentle meanings and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves
Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends forth its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine
A soul-dissolving odour, to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades
Like vapourous shapes half seen: beyond a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,
Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect, floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected lines
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
An unaccustomed presence and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed
To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes
Of shadowy silver or enshining light,

Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery,—
But undulating woods, and silent well,
And rippling rivulet, and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming
Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was,—only . . . when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness . . . two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him.

Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
The windings of the dell.—The rivulet,
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony,
Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones
It danced, like childhood laughing as it went ;
Then through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept,
Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness.—“ O stream !
Whose source is inaccessiblely profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend ?
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulphs,
Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course,
Have each their type in me : And the wide sky
And measureless ocean may declare as soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud
Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
I' the passing wind !”

Beside the grassy shore
Of the small stream he went ; he did impress
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch
Of fever he did move ; yet, not like him,
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame

Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he went
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet ; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
The struggling brook : tall spires of windlestrae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines,
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white : and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shown, gleam stony orbs : so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued
The stream, that with a larger volume now
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell, and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and its precipice,
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
'Mid toppling stones, black gulphs, and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
To the loud stream. Lo ! where the pass expands
Its strong jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks
And seems, with its accumulated crags,
To overhang the world : for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy

Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
 Yielding one only response at each pause,
 In most familiar cadence, with the howl
 The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams.
 Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,
 Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
 Fell into that immeasurable void,
 Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

The dim and horned moon hung low, and poured
 A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
 That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist
 Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank
 Wan moonlight even to fulness; not a star
 Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,
 Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
 Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O storm of death.
 Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night:
 And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
 Guiding its irresistible career
 In thy devastating omnipotence,
 Art king of this frail world, from the red field
 Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
 The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
 Of innocence, the scaffold, and the throne,
 A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls
 His brother Death. A rare and regal prey
 He hath prepared, prowling around the world;
 Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men
 Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,
 Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
 The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess
 The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
 Was on him. Yet a little ere it fled,
 Did he resign his high and holy soul
 To images of the majestic past,
 That paused within his passive being now,
 Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
 Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
 His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk

Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head; his limbs did rest,
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and Despair,
The torturers, slept: no mortal pain or fear
Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,
And his *alma* being unalloyed by pain,
Yet feeble and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
It rests, and still as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With nature's ebb and flow grew feebler still:
And when two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained
Utterly black, the murky shades involved
An image, silent, cold, and motionless,
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—
No sense, no motion, no divinity—
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream
Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever,
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

Oh, for Medea's wondrous alchymy,
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam

With bright flowers, and wintry boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance ! Oh, that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
Which but one living man has drained, who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath a slave that feels
No proud exemption in the blighting curse
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,
Lone as incarnate death ! Oh ! that the dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world ! But thou art fled
Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams,—ah ! thou hast fled !
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
The child of grace and genius.

Upon those palid lips
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes
That image sleep in death, upon that form
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
Let not high verse, mourning the memory
Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,
And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their light to shade.
It is a woe too ' deep for tears,' when all
Is left at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, nor sobs nor groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope ;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

PART FIRST.

A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt every where ;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness.
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snow-drop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness ;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green ;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense ;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addrest,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare ;

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky ;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was pranked under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue.

Broad water lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels ;
And flowrets which drooping as day drooped too,
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it,)

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun ;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver;

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower,
Radiance and odour are not its dower:
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumed insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,
And the earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, tho' less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were
drowned

In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, tho' they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only over head the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant.)

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

PART SECOND.

There was a power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling grace
Which to the flowers did they waken or dream
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind,
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth.

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the moon kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise.

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Tho' the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet ;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers thro' all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam ;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and ozier bands ;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket of grasses and wild flowers fall,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beam-like ephemeris,
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring
Thus moved through the garden, ministering
All the sweet season of summer tide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died.

PART THIRD.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair
Like stars, when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Balaë, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low ;

The weary sound and heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank ;

The dark grass, and flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass ;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lively, as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson now,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scents and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew
Leaf after leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,

Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the winged seeds
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet,
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless net-work of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould,
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murder's stake
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on nigh,
Infecting the winds that wander by.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,

its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill :
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And the unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noon-day
Unseen ; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant like one forbid
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves which together grew
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn ;
The sap shrank to the root, through every pore,
As the blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came ; the wind was his whip :
One choppy finger was on his lip :
He had torn the cataracts from the hills,
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles ;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound ;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath ;
Their decay and sudden flight from the frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost !

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want :
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air,
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain,
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,

Then there steamed up a freezing dew,
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew -

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back,
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck; [darnels,
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and
Rose like the dead from the ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION.

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat,
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change—I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never pass'd away :
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed ; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change : their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

THE END.

68411

